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Will War Destroy Civilization?

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

FOR NEARLY a hundred and fifty years, ever since the French Revolution, wars have become greater and more destructive, so that today it can be seriously asked whether war will destroy our civilization. Certainly another war like the last would endanger it, and another such outbreak is by no means impossible.

No one in his senses would make light of such a danger. On the other hand a survey of what is known about war in its relation to society is encouraging. Such a survey shows first that war is always more or less limited; second that whenever in history it has approached its absolute or theoretically unlimited form, it has after a time been severely limited.

The writer well knows that to speak of war as necessarily limited is contrary to first impressions. Snap judgement on proposals for limiting it is likely to follow that of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison on the measures proposed a century ago for gradually freeing the slaves: "Say to a man whose house is burning that he must sound a moderate alarm. Say to a man that he shall tear his wife from the hands of thieves with moderation. Say to the mother that she shall gradually pull her child out of the fire into which it has fallen." Moreover "absolute" war has been taught by most military writers for over a century, and it seems rash to oppose the long list of authorities beginning with Clausewitz and ending with Foch. Organized violence means death and death is an absolute without shading or relativity.

But has war ever been completely unlimited? If so history would record the extermination of considerable human groups, as wolves have been exterminated over large areas. In fact it seems to contain not a single instance. If one could be found it would seem inhuman in the truest sense—that is, contrary to the whole nature of man. At least the women of the defeated side are assets too valuable to be destroyed by the most ferocious conqueror; they are regarded for their labour, their reproductive power, and usually through sentiment and natural affection. In the vast literature of hatred the writer can remember only one recorded approval of child-killing: in the ninth verse of the one hundred and thirty-seventh psalm the Jewish poet of vengeance says of the daughters of Babylon: "Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children and dasheth them against the stones." Even between bodies of armed men, combats of mutual extermination are exceptional; notwithstanding the many instances of prisoner-killing, mercy is usually shown to those who surrender. Battles between undisciplined men not on fire for some cause or other are hardly more than cat fights—much cry, a very little wool, and a total absence of corpses. Even in the last war certain moral restraints were observed; for instance no country, however hard up for meat and fats, either ate its prisoners or boiled them for explosives. The story that the Germans were boiling down corpses for fat seems to have arisen because during an allied advance the heads of two German cooks who had been stirring a large cauldron of stew were taken off by a shell and landed in the pot where they were afterwards found along with the other ingredients.

Accordingly the acts of organized violence known as wars are always limited by human nature with its indestructible minimum of moral restraint. They are limited politically because the object of all wars is a good peace (except in the rare cases when the consequences of surrender appear so terrible that it seems better to go down fighting), economically by the resources on which the community can draw and the sacrifices to which it will consent, technically by the extent of its peace-time knowledge of and preparation for war and by the degree in which it can and will transform itself during the struggle.

At the other end of the scale, no society can completely lay aside arms. No matter how peaceable and well agreed among themselves its members may be, they must have armed police to discourage possible thieves, murderers, and rioters. And since communities and their governments cannot reach ideal purity and saintliness any more than the individuals which compose them, there will always be a minimum of warfare, some of it just and some unjust in motive, some for material wealth and some through conflicts of moral and religious passion. Accordingly the practical problem is not that of abolishing war, which is impossible, but that of limiting its destructive effects. If anyone despair of this, he has only to glance at military history to discover that wars run in cycles, rising towards the unattainable, absolute form, then falling back under strict limitation. Should he confine himself to the modern period, he will be wholesomely concerned to note that the centuries of "absolute" war outnumber those of drastically limited war by nearly two to one. But if he take the last two thousand years as a whole, he will be encouraged to find that not only the eighteenth century but also the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages did an admirable job of restriction. With nearly seventeen centuries of limited as against three of anything like "absolute" war, surely the former rather than the latter is normal to man. If it is artificial, as the nineteenth-century theorists claimed, then once more, were the distressed populations of 1918 artificial for not resorting to cannibalism or boiling down their prisoners for fats? The present writer, although at least as free as the average educated man from unmixed admiration of our own twentieth century, is not convinced that four centuries of Protestantism together with a century and a half of democracy and universal education have so destroyed the collective intelligence and goodwill of Christendom that nothing can be done to cure our diseases including that of insufficiently limited war. What man has done, man can do.

Diagnosis must always be the first step towards cure. Against those who say that the deadliness and destructive power of modern weapons are the essence of our danger, history shows the exhausting wars of the later Roman Republic to have been fought with the same swords, spears, and javelins as the limited wars of the Empire, the colossal Revolutionary-Napoleonic affair to have been orchestrated by cannon and muskets no more powerful than those of the eighteenth-century limited wars. The limitation of war is a permanent human problem successfully solved again and again in the past.

There is indeed a grim irony in material progress in that so many of its instruments are potential weapons. But this is no more true of complex things like the merchant ship convertible into a warship (of a sort), the commercial airplane convertible into a fighting airplane, the caterpillar tractor convertible into a tank, or the chemical knowledge which makes possible explosives and poison gas, than it is of simple devices like the knife and the axe. As regards destruction, Rome needed no high explosives to blot out Carthage and Jerusalem; her white-man's hatred of the Semitic soul was enough. Increased power to destroy is more or less balanced by increased power to protect and build. Moreover we may see from the example of a cat fight that the deadliness of weapons is not the root of the matter, for in regard to each other two cats are formidably armed. Raise from two bitterly hostile populations two armies, discipline them and train them to fight with sticks and stones, and there is nothing to prevent their killing each other off to the last man—if they choose. As far as weapons go, ancient battles, fought hand to hand or at the shortest ranges, seem to have been more deadly, at least to the defeated side, than modern combats of the same size and duration.

What matters is first the will to fight, second the extent to which the community is involved in the struggle, third the amount of damage inflicted before a decision is reached. The first is a moral question; the second and third are divided between morals and military technique.

In part the will to fight springs from natural combativeness but this does not carry us far. Ardant Du Picq's monumental *Étude sur le combat*, on which is built much of the present elaborate French study of morale, begins: "Man fights not for the sake of the struggle but for victory. He does all he can to do away with the first and assure the second." The passage continues by reminding us that the tactics of savages are those of ambush and surprise; in other words, the natural man seeks not a stand-up fight but a victim who can be assassinated. Accordingly, real fighting demands some real loyalty in the fighters. Their effectiveness may be increased by armament and training, but without loyalty on which to build, little more than a cat fight will result. Thus hired soldiers interested only in their pay are almost worthless; the classic instance is that of the Renaissance Italian mercenaries so justly scorned by Machiavelli for fighting battles against each other without a single man killed.

Loyalty however takes many forms. It may be a strong interest in a particular quarrel or enthusiasm for an individual leader. It may be that little patriotism within a military unit which the French call *esprit de corps*—"The Old Guard dies but never surrenders", or the Tenth Legion, or the British Grenadiers. It was astonishing how quickly divisional spirit grew in the A. E. F., beginning of course with such crack divisions as the First and Second. Usually however the hot loyalty that makes men fight is either patriotism for a city or a nation, or else it is devotion to a form of government or a religion. This last is the ultimate loyalty; local patriotism at its highest takes on a colour of religious worship so that the citizen feels his national ideal as supremely important —a sort of god.

The societies which have succeeded in limiting war have all achieved a considerable measure of religious and therefore of moral agreement. In the Roman Empire it was the cult of the Divine Emperor together with humanist reverence for the high ethics of the Civil Law; in the Middle Ages it was the Catholic Faith; in the eighteenth century it was a restricted but real humanist worship of measure and decorum founded on the classic culture then universal among educated men. Conversely, the societies which have indulged in unlimited war have been those which suffered from clashing religions and moralities which they were unable either to unify or to reconcile.

Now every modern ideal is divisive. Christianity with its universal message survives, but Christians are divided into three main groups of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, and each of the three is subdivided: Orthodoxy on national lines, the Roman Catholic societies into clericals and anti-clericals who range from devout believers to militant atheists, and Protestantism into innumerable sects. It is therefore no wonder that since 1648 the Faith has not been our main motive for political action. Certainly since 1793, the chief religion of modern men has been nationalism. National patriotism was already apparent in Joan of Arc's time; in the last four centuries it has grown so that today people bridle up at the mildest effort to enforce religious authority and yet take the heaviest sacrifices for granted when commanded by a national government. It is true that the democratic ideal of the French Revolution was international in theory and roused prompt echoes in Italy and along the Rhine. Indeed the Revolutionary-Napoleonic destruction of outworn and obstructive feudal privileges and the dream of a great, reasonable modern state were never narrowly local in their appeal; the wide enthusiasm for the promise of a new Europe was reflected in the furious valour of Napoleon's Italian and Swiss contingents as late as 1812. At the same time the French conquests not only raised French nationalism to a hitherto unheard of height but also, by reaction, fanned opposing nationalisms into a blaze; the aristocracies and kings of Europe were glad enough to appeal to localism as well as to every traditional sentiment which might persuade the masses to resist the Gallic crusade. Much of the zeal for freeing the oppressed, beginning as an inter-class affair inspired largely by mercantile envy against the nobles, was easily shifted into desire for the freedom of oppressed nationalities; Napoleon helped Poland, and the cannon of Waterloo had hardly fallen silent before the first scattering shots of the war for Greek independence rang out. More or less democratic nationalism ran red through the nineteenth-century wars, swelled to a torrent of blood in 1914-18, and inspired the peacemakers of 1919 to invent new nations never before dreamed of.

The moral disunion of the democratic era explains its social and military history. In 1793 social chaos produced a new technical form, the universal-service army. Between 1914 and 1918 universal-service, together with other technical factors to which we shall come in a moment, in its turn begot social chaos in Russia and the threat of it elsewhere.

That the French Revolution convulsed society is well known; with her own regular army disorganized in the chaos, the universal service with which France outnumbered and beat back the professional soldiers of Austria and Prussia was her only resource. Recently Professor Ferrero has shown that it was a corresponding social chaos appearing in Italy in the wake of the French armies which forbade the Republic to rest content with the comparatively modest desire for the "natural frontiers" of Gaul, the Alps, and the Rhine, and forced the establishment of the democratic Italian puppet states of France which led to the French Empire. In the *Illustrated London News* of January 16, 1932, Ferrero says:

> In 1796 and '97, in the whole of the Italian States two parties were formed, vehement and active minorities, a democratic party favourable to the ideas of the Revolution and France, and an ultra-conservative party which supported the ancient régime—Church, absolute monarchy, the aristocratic régime—to the last gasp. These two parties were not slow in insulting each other, arms in hand: while the Governments, enfeebled and discredited by the invasion, stood passively by in a manner which reminded one of the Ministers Giolitti and

Facta in the midst of the factions let loose by the war in 1920 and 1921. When Bonaparte returned from Leoben, he found Northern and Central Italy in flames; the two parties massacred each other before the eyes of impotent authority and the inert majority, the revolutionaries attempted to overthrow the old régime; the other party defended it by substituting itself for the Government and by massacring the French when they were the stronger.

It was a struggle to the death which was beginning between two minorities. . . . It seems . . . to explain the whole Italian policy of Napoleon and the Directorate. Neither Bonaparte nor the Directorate wished for these disturbances; both well understood that they were a great danger for France; but they could not stop them, although they tried; and at last Bonaparte was obliged to intervene to prevent a complete collapse of the old Legality, which would have confronted the small French army with chaos, enflamed by the most violent anti-revolutionary hatreds. That was why he organized the Cisalpine Republic so precipitately on his return to Italy in 1797, the fatal act which caused the Revolution to be caught up in the Italian tangle.

Even supposing that Bonaparte's army in the Austrian Alps could have been safely withdrawn across Italy to France, such a retreat would have meant not only the abandonment of the war against Austria on the Italian sector where the French had been so brilliantly victorious, but also the massacre of the Italian democrats by the counter-revolutionaries, and the encouragement of royalism everywhere. Accordingly France preferred to go down the road which was to lead to Moscow and Waterloo.

The recent reversal of the process, with military technique producing social chaos, is equally clear. When we ask how the powers of 1914 came to be conscript, we must go for the answer to democracy's own child, vehement nationalism; especially the ambition, fear, and success of Prussia. That power, having led in the partition of Poland, had been the most predatory monarchy of pre-revolutionary Europe. Crushed by Napoleon's conscripts, and her standing army limited by treaty, she saw no way of remaining an important military power except by imitating the army of her conqueror. The other legitimist governments retained the professional system, and after 1815 France returned to it; Prussia alone continued conscription. Studying the French successes, she judged national ambition best served by an armed nation. Also she doubtless feared new French aggressions, for men tend to think that the immediate past, in which they were brought up, must return; and her newly seized province on the Rhine was more exposed to France than was the territory of any great power. It is worth repeating that to prefer numbers rather than high training chimed perfectly with the democratic cult of quantity as against quality; and that another Prussian reason for valuing conscription was that it extended the democratic device of universal education. Professional soldiers long laughed at the awkward Prussian conscript, but after his mid-century victories, and chiefly his defeat of the regulars of Napoleon III, every great power set up universal service.

The object of conscription was to raise enormous armies. Now the clumsiness of an enormous army had always been known; in 1812 it robbed Napoleon of decisive victory near the Russian frontiers, and so set the stage for his fatal error of marching on Moscow. When in 1914, for the first time in history, two great conscript masses were opposed, each was like the giant dinosaur whose bones fill a great hall in a museum although his brain was only the size of an egg. Moreover each was armed with firearms whose great power made the defensive far stronger than the offensive. In the event, no positive military decision was reached for over four years.

But when the defensive predominates, famine approaches, and people dislike going hungry. Moreover they dislike harsh discipline suddenly imposed on them, not to speak of the effort required of a whole population when a conscript army is to be kept in the field. War being under any circumstances desperately uncomfortable and horribly dangerous, to persuade such millions to endurance it was necessary to fanaticize them. Since no exalted mood or severe strain can long continue without collapse, the wonder is not that Russia collapsed in 1917; it is that she held out so long, while the central and western European nations, among whom democratic ideas, parliamentarism, universal education, et cetera, were more developed, were able to go on for another year.

How then might we break into the vicious circle of democratic social passions, chaos leading to universal service, vehement nationalism deliberately organizing the technique which had been the natural expression of social upheaval, then an increased dose of universal service leading back to social chaos again?

He would be a rash man who would look to the chief new moral and political development, communism, for unity or peace. It is indeed an international ideal for which men have proved willing to kill and be killed, a new religion capable of inspiring flaming faith, but a materialist religion envious of superior talent and fortune, hostile to normal human things, from God and permanent marriage down to property. Moreover, in spite of its dictatorship, it is a part of the democratic movement, merely shifting the mystic "All men are (or should be) equal" idea from politics to economics.

There remains the tendency toward federation represented by the League of Nations. Trade and finance are indeed internationalizing themselves. In a little known but brilliant essay called "The Natural History of War", so keen a mind as General J. F. C. Fuller, whom the British Service calls "Boney" Fuller to liken his intelligence to that of the Corsican, has suggested an "Economic Papacy" of great capitalists to iron out national rivalries. The difficulty here is moral; no true federation of international capitalism seems likely because big business men are not generally loved. More often they are detested. Blind hatred of them is a chief source of communism. How can men be loyal to superiors who are neither Princes, Lords, nor Fathers but only bags of money? The gentlemen of old time had at least a cult of honour and courage; the new masters represent nothing but successful acquisitiveness.

Admitting this, General Fuller thinks that an "Economic Papacy" might stabilize society long enough to allow a moral rally to come from within. Thus the moral aspiration of man to unify his individual and social life is as much part of him as yeast is of bread; but if, when yeast has been put into a lump of dough, the dough is always being pulled to pieces, no good loaf will result.

The present writer nevertheless suspects that such argument puts the cart before the horse, that no social stability will come except that which has a real moral nucleus around which to gather. While it is true that the war-weariness of today is not altogether unlike that which followed the great Roman foreign and civil wars and led to Augustus's pacification, yet in 29 B. C. you at least had Rome as a centre. Roman gentlemen like Horace and Virgil, although they must have smiled privately at the idea of Augustus being a god, were anything but cynical as to the peace-giving mission of their city—the Roman sword guarding the humble and warring down the proud. Again, had Napoleonic Europe been given time to settle down, it would have had at least a strong nucleus in France. Today, however, there is no centre, and instead we have nationalisms as much stronger than those of Napoleon's time as these were stronger than the dust of fatigued city patriotisms with which Augustus had to deal. Be they never so eager to serve international finance, contemporary politicians must reckon with the fact that the nation remains the moral unit of mankind.

Moreover, men rightly hesitate to attack nationalism, for although it hinders us from peaceably dealing with foreigners, it remains the chief moral bond of union within each nation. We instinctively feel that the average internationalist must be something of a scoundrel.

Morally nationalism remains so strong that, even in the present pause of exhaustion, the world's chief nationalist quarrel, that between France and Germany, seems likely again to come to a head.

A real and positive religious reunion would of course solve the problem. Accordingly the various movements in that direction are hopeful. On the other hand, their limitations have so far been obvious. The Anglican Communion, to which the American Episcopal Church belongs, seems likely to come to an understanding with the Eastern Orthodox, but Orthodoxy has been politically weakened by events in Russia, and Anglicanism outside of England is only a small though influential minority. The Pope still remains unwilling to offer the smallest concessions even in ritual or discipline (such as the marriage of the clergy); at the time of the Malines conversations between the great Cardinal Mercier and certain influential Anglicans the Vatican did not see fit to volunteer publicly so much as the modest statement that for the sake of unity in weightier matters it would allow variety in the Church customs for which it claims only human origin. As for Protestantism, its decline has been so rapid that the tendency of its melting bodies to merge seems as much a sign of increasing weakness as of new strength.

Protestant pacifism suffers from a distressing vagueness. Its leaders seem unwilling or unable to discuss the distinction between just and unjust killing. And yet their preachers constantly cry for more of the coercive power of government whenever they can incorporate one of their taboos into a statute. In so far as their pacifism rightly detests the current heresy of the morally omnipotent state whose citizens must not question its acts, most thoughtful men are with them. But they seem to get no further than the "slacker oath", whereas present conditions in America compel us to ask how much peace the community will have left if its citizens do not soon rise in arms against their criminal enemies. Peace must be a peace of order.

The wealth which attracts the criminal gives its possessors the power to arm and defend themselves. America has a constantly increasing number of armed men in private pay. To the scandal of democrats, both Fascist Italy and Communist Russia have already gone a long way toward setting up their dominant parties as armed aristocracies. If an armed aristocracy can win a real consent to its rule from the mass of its subjects, there seems no reason why it should not prove an enduring form of government. All the new theories of government imply a controlling body; the fact is admitted even by radicals to whom the rags of democracy still cling. So thorough a hater of traditional gentility as H. G. Wells took the armed gentlemen of Japan as the starting point of his "Proposals for Establishing an Order of Samurai"; had he confined himself to his own country he could have found Orders of Knighthood without the heathen Japanese cult of suicide. After all, the old knights, lords, and kings of Europe were not reverenced for the fun of it, although loyalty is a large part of happiness; they were valued for the work they did, in the modern jargon for their "social utility". Louis XIV, who stage managed kingship so effectively, had no illusions as to the source of its power; having in his youth seen insurrection and civil war, he took pains in his will to remind his heir that "man, being naturally suspicious and proud, will never consent to be governed by another man until his own need shows him the necessity".

It is true that both Italy and Russia, in spite of their tendency toward armed aristocracy, have retained conscription for possible wars with other countries. But at the same time a new technique of war has appeared, especially in England, which promises to increase the power of an armed *élite* as against the lumbering hordes typical of democracy.

This new technique of war is called mechanization and is built in part around the airplane but chiefly around the tank. We have seen that the clumsiness of very large armies helped mightily to produce the autumn stalemate of 1914, and that the entrenched deadlock was prolonged by the high defensive power of modern weapons. Especially the machine-gun did the trick; a single one could annihilate attacking infantry on so wide a front that it was necessary to blast an objective thoroughly with high explosive shell before the slightest advance was possible. The necessity for blasting was increased by the effectiveness of barbed wire as an obstacle in front of a position. In its turn the blasting process slowed down the attack by pitting the bombarded area with shell craters. Even when, as in the German attacks of the spring and early summer of 1918, the forward movement overswept the old front, the shell-torn zone still remained an awkward stumbling block against reinforcement and supply, so that the advanced elements would finally be stopped by comparatively feeble opposition.

But toward the end of the War both sides began to see that in the tank the Allies had found an answer to the bloody defensive riddle. Through the internal combustion engine and the caterpillar tractor, an armed vehicle had appeared, armoured against rifle and machine-gun fire, contemptuous of barbed wire, able to cross bad ground and shell holes, and protected by its mobility (slight though that mobility then was) against the cannon of the defense. In his *All Quiet on the Western Front* Remarque eloquently describes the moral effect of these armoured monsters on the Germans:

> We do not see the guns that bombard us; the attacking lines of the enemy infantry are men like ourselves; but these tanks are machines, their caterpillars run on as endless as the war, they are annihilation, they roll without feeling into the craters, and climb up again without stopping, a fleet of roaring smoke-belching armor-clads, invulnerable steel beasts squashing the dead and the wounded—we shrivel up in our thin skin before them, against their colossal weight our arms are sticks of straw, and our hand-grenades matches.

That tanks contributed largely to the final decision no one will deny.

The development of the tank did not stop with the Armistice. The war-time tank could not go much faster than a walk; nor did it need to, for it was intended only as an auxiliary weapon for facilitating the advance of infantry in trench warfare. But the new British vehicles and especially the American Christie tank far exceed this; over good ground the latter will do forty miles an hour on its caterpillars, and these can be removed, leaving it free to run on wheels like any fast automobile.

It needs no argument to show how such machines will transform the technique of ground warfare. In power of manoeuvre and rapid concentration they obviously exceed anything the world has known. Some of the new British tanks float, propel themselves, and steer in water like boats. In repelling tank attacks no true infantry weapon—that is no weapon a single man can carry comfortably for any distance—seems likely to count. The question will be not how many defenders are present but how many giant machine guns and little cannon. And here again the question of mobility comes into play, for the weapons of the defense must be able to concentrate quickly in a given area in order to cope with sudden concentrations of the tanks and tractor-mounted cannon of the attack.

Clearly, under such circumstances infantry is sunk. It will remain indispensable for service in such exceptional areas as may remain impossible for tanks, for mopping up, for the defence of fortified bases, and for emergency police work in cities where you must enter buildings in order to bring out the particular individuals you are after. But although indispensable it will be subordinate.

If infantry is subordinate, then the conscript army is finished. Tanks, like fifteenth-century suits of armour, cost as much as a small but profitable farm. But what a weapon for an armed, professional *élite*. The tank-man revives the armoured Byzantine horse-archers who stung back from eastern Europe the barbaric hordes of a thousand years. He is the steel-clad mediaeval knight, gleefully spurring his great charger into no matter how vast a *jacquerie* of revolted peasants.

Meanwhile, to give time for tank technique and the idea of armed aristocracy to grow, we are favoured with a pause of war weariness. For the moment it would be impossible to get up another unpleasantness on anything like the scale of the last; everywhere there would be too many draft-dodgers and tax-dodgers. As for people willing to buy war bonds, if indeed the species still exists after what has happened to it since 1914, we are safe in predicting that any surviving specimens which might appear would be museum pieces. Nations like the Poles and Yugo-Slavs could mobilize their conscripts, if they liked, and so could the French, although France would doubtless march reluctantly. But does anyone think that Mussolini is eager to have a chance of mobilizing conscript Italy? Who believes that the messianic emotionalism of Hitler would be able to persuade the German factory populations to carry on with sufficient cheerfulness through another prolonged universal-service war? What good would a general mobilization do either Japan or any power at war with that remote country?

These questions lead to others not so easy to answer. From now on, will democracy and nationalism ebb? Or will whole peoples again march off cheering? That is to say, will mass massacre begin again, and if so how soon? We do not know.

Sex and Property

G. K. Chesterton

In the dull, dusty, stale, stiff-jointed, and lumbering language, to which most modern discussion is limited, it is necessary to say that there is at this moment the same fashionable fallacy about Sex and about Property. In the older and freer language, in which men could both speak and sing, it is truer to say that the same evil spirit has blasted the two great powers that make the poetry of life; the Love of Woman and the Love of the Land. It is important to observe, to start with, that these two things were closely connected so long as humanity was human, even when it was heathen. Nay, they were still closely connected, even when it was a decadent heathenism. But even the stink of decaying heathenism has not been so bad as the stink of decaying Christianity. *Corruptio optimi pessimum.*

For instance, there were throughout antiquity, both in its first stage and its last, modes of idolatry and imagery of which Christian men can hardly speak. "Let them not be so much as named among you." Men wallowed in the mere sexuality of a mythology of sex; they organised prostitution like priesthood, for the service of their temples; they made pornography their only poetry; they paraded emblems that turned even architecture into a sort of cold and colossal exhibitionism. Many learned books have been written of all these phallic cults; and anybody can go to them for the details, for all I care. But what interests me is this.

In one way all this ancient sin was infinitely superior, immeasurably superior, to the modern sin. All those who write of it at least agree on one fact; that it was the cult of Fruitfulness. It was very often interwoven, very closely, with the cult of the fruitfulness of the land. It was at least on the side of Nature. It was at least on the side of Life. It has been left to the last Christians, or rather to the first Christians fully committed to blaspheming and denying Christianity, to invent a new kind of worship of Sex, which is not even a worship of Life. It has been left to the very latest Modernists to proclaim an erotic religion which at once exalts lust and forbids fertility. The new Paganism literally merits the reproach of Swinburne, when mourning for the old Paganism: "and rears not the bountiful token and spreads not the fatherly feast". The new priests abolish the fatherhood and keep the feast—to themselves. They are worse than Swinburne's Pagans. The priests of Priapus and Cotytto go into the kingdom of heaven before them.

Now it is not unnatural that this unnatural separation, between sex and fruitfulness, which even the Pagans would have thought a perversion, has been accompanied with a similar separation and perversion about the nature of the love of the land. In both departments there is precisely the same fallacy; which it is quite possible to state precisely. The reason why our contemporary countrymen do not understand what we mean by Property is that they only think of it in the sense of Money; in the sense of salary; in the sense of something which is immediately consumed, enjoyed, and expended; something which gives momentary pleasure and disappears. They do not understand that we mean by Property something that includes that pleasure incidentally; but begins and ends with something far more grand and worthy and creative. The man who makes an orchard where there has been a field, who owns the orchard and decides to whom it shall descend, does also enjoy the taste of apples; and let us hope, also, the taste of cider. But he is doing something very much grander, and ultimately more gratifying, than merely eating an apple. He is imposing his will upon the world in the manner of the charter given him by the will of God; he is asserting that his soul is his own, and does not belong to the Orchard Survey Department, or the Chief Trust in the apple trade. But he is also doing something which was implicit in all the most ancient religions of the earth; in those great panoramas of pageantry and ritual that followed the order of the seasons in China or Babylonia; he is worshipping the fruitfulness of the world. Now the notion of narrowing property to merely *enjoying* money is exactly like the notion of narrowing love to merely *enjoying* sex. In both cases an incidental, isolated, servile, and even secretive pleasure is substituted for participation in a great creative process; even in the everlasting Creation of the world.

The two sinister things can be seen side by side in the system of Bolshevist Russia; for Communism is the only complete and logical working model of Capitalism. The sins are there a system which are everywhere else a sort of repeated blunder. From the first, it is admitted, the whole system was directed towards encouraging or driving the worker to spend his wages; to have nothing left on the next pay day; to enjoy everything and consume everything and efface everything; in short, to shudder at the thought of only one crime; the creative crime of thrift. It was a tame extravagance; a sort of disciplined dissipation; a meek and submissive prodigality. For the moment the slave left off drinking all his wages, the moment he began to hoard or hide any property, he would be saving up something which might ultimately purchase his liberty. He might begin to count for something in the State; that is, he might become less of a slave and more of a citizen. Morally considered, there has been nothing quite so unspeakably mean as this Bolshevist generosity. But it will be noted that exactly the same spirit and tone pervades the manner of dealing with the other matter. Sex also is to come to the slave merely as a pleasure; that it may never be a power. He is to know as little as possible, or at least to think as little as possible, of the pleasure as anything else except a pleasure; to think or know nothing of where it comes from or where it will go to, when once the soiled object has passed through his own hands. He is not to trouble about its origin in the purposes of God or its sequel in the posterity of man. In every department he is not a possessor, but only a consumer; even if it be of the first elements of life and fire in so far as they are consumable; he is to have no notion of the sort of Burning Bush that burns and is not consumed. For that bush only grows on the soil, on the real land where human beings can behold it; and the spot on which they stand is holy ground. Thus there is an exact parallel between the two modern moral, or immoral, ideas of social reform. The world has forgotten simultaneously that the making of a Farm is something much larger than the making of a profit, or even a product, in the sense of liking the taste of beetroot sugar; and that the founding of a Family is something much larger than sex in the limited sense of current literature; which was anticipated in one bleak and blinding flash in a single line of George Meredith: "And eat our pot of honey on the grave."

Difficulties of History

HENRI MASSIS

THE intellectual activity of men today is wholly taken up with the realm of the contingent: hence the commanding place which history, criticism, and scholarship have gradually come to assume, even to the exclusion of genuine thought. But in this fluid and uncertain world of contingence, studied without principles, we can find none of the essentiality, the definiteness, which our spirit craves. It is a world that favours pure individualism in matters of doctrine, the breeding of the most contradictory and subjective opinions. In this world "historicism" might be said to be the natural attitude. It is stamped, that is to say, with the peculiar error of the modern world: the belief that in rearing the structure of science the contingent is alone sufficient. I shall endeavour to show that this is not sufficient for this purpose unless it is moved and ordered by the light derived from some intellectual truth; in the last analysis, from the necessary and universal first principles of reason.

Renan, overcome by the weight of mere things, was forced at last to this confession of impotence: "Historical science—little sciences of guess-work that collapse as fast as they are built, and will be forgotten in a hundred years!" The same thing can be said of other sciences to the extent that they are affected by "historicism", in the shape of relativism or evolutionism; they come to us lacking consistency in just those aspects that are most intellectual, that is to say in their principles and in their theories. In this respect they afford us the spectacle of a sort of dust-cloud of doctrines, conveying no impression but that of utter confusion: and this explains the profound uneasiness of modern men.

The relativism which is at the base of the historical spirit—the spirit which has spread everywhere—is the cause of this painful lack of certainty. Indeed, the kinds of reasoning and conjecture which deal with individual and contingent things can never attain absolute certainty. They usually provide no more than a calculus of probability which might be defined thus: the relation of the number of events favouring a given outcome to the number of possible events. What cause is there for the multiplicity of possible events, except the power of matter and of liberty, the sources of all contingence? We can begin to understand the underlying reason why uncertainty inevitably besets certain categories of knowledge for us, historical knowledge more than any other: that *individual* facts are much more suitable objects for observation or testimony than they are for reasoning.

In history observation takes place only through testimony and documents. Now one cannot but be forcibly struck by the contingent nature of the document in history. There is nothing that ensures its existence; it may be complete or exist only in a crude form. Quite otherwise is it with the natural sciences. There the parade of facts is found recurring according to laws; so that the same facts can be constantly verified by the direct observation of experiment. The succession of historical facts is discontinuous, so that the historian often falls back on reasoning to make up for shortage in his sources. Now to reconstruct human actions by reasoning is not scientific: nothing in that type of work goes beyond conjecture and plausibility. The point need not be pressed: it is evident enough that an application of logic which aims at filling documentary gaps leaves the door wide for uncertainty, if not for fantasy.

Much the same thing can be said of the choice which the historian necessarily must exercise among the facts known to him. What is really the problem? The problem is to find a reason for selection, a criterion. Now such a criterion cannot but be foreign to history and above it. A general idea, a philosophical idea, is needed in weighing the historical importance of the facts. A work of history like that of Jacques Bainville, for instance, arises from a general view of man and human nature; a view very similar, fundamentally, to that of La Fontaine. The judgement that evaluates the worth of facts cannot have its basis in the facts themselves. Always and everywhere, selection will be made by a criterion which is not derived experimentally from the facts which are under judgement—whatever may be the social, political, religious, literary, or purely aesthetic value of that criterion.

Furthermore, who can flatter himself that he has exhausted all the documents, assembled all the material? Every day sees the publication of documents, of memoirs, which modify our judgements. Nor is that all. Brunetière could make this remark: "History cannot be pinned down; like humanity itself it is always in motion. . . . Which of us regards the Revolution today as the generation of Thiers and Michelet regarded it, and why have we changed? The answer is that we are no longer the same men; that fifty or sixty years have gone by; that the same facts no longer appear to us in the same light." Thus it is not only because of the discovery of fresh evidence that certain facts can alter in value, but also because of passage of time, or new perspectives, or the greater or lesser intellectual maturity of the historian.

I do not mean that the weighing of facts is by definition a subjective matter. I believe, on the contrary, that it can and ought to be done according to objective and impersonal principles. But these principles are beyond the power of history to furnish. How could it be otherwise, since the problem is that of assembling history's own material? Whether he likes it or not, the historian is forced to resort to the data of some other science or even of several sciences.

It is not only in order to be justly estimated that a human fact requires the intervention of knowledge and principles attained elsewhere, but also to be *established as a fact*; for it needs to be understood, judged, interpreted. Every human fact is deeply penetrated with intelligence and will; these form part of its concrete reality, its innermost structure. One can see here the error of a purely materialistic interpretation of history: it erects mutilation of facts into a principle and retains only their external forms. In reality an abyss separates human action from natural facts. The latter are that and no more; the former are the image, the material expression of a spiritual fact—the sign of a soul with its feelings, thoughts, and needs. They cannot be understood, or interpreted, or evaluated, or even arranged empirically, without having recourse to principles and doctrines that stand above history.

If this is true when the problem is that of amassing material, it is a graver matter when the problem is that of co-ordinating it, of bringing it under general laws. And indeed history does not limit itself to collecting facts and events; it attempts to show them in their mutual relations and dependence, to establish a causal chain among them. For it is to the extent that facts can be linked with cause that we are able to understand their succession or coexistence.

There are two meanings for causality. The first consists of linking a fact with another fact which precedes it. This kind of causality is concrete and in a fashion material. It is the only one that properly belongs to history. As a matter of fact it never goes beyond the individual and limits itself to placing such and such facts in such and such relations of coexistence or succession. The second meaning is that of the natural and physical sciences: it consists of bringing a particular relation of succession or coexistence under a general law. Only this procedure is genuinely explanatory. Let us see whether history can make use of it—whether, in other words, it can by its own resources *arrive at general truths.*

The first form of causality, we have said, is entirely concrete and individual. An antecedent fact is found to be linked to another fact in a particular relation. The proper intellectual task of history is to seek out this relation. Now even taking for granted that it performs this task according to the demands of the most rigorous criticism, it will still lack the essential character of a science properly so called: *generalization.* The human actions and facts for which history undertakes to provide a logical exposition are so complex that they seem to defy such unifying power as the human intellect possesses. They respond to causes of every order and kind, their motives are infinitely various. This multiplicity is often a well-nigh insurmountable obstacle to giving coherence to facts and events. Moreover, how are we to grasp as a whole the causes and conditions of an event without having first grasped and verified each one separately? Any misunderstanding or error concerning one of the antecedents may distort the causal relationship which is at issue.

It is vain, furthermore, to think of escaping the difficulty inherent in the multiplicity and heterogeneity of causes by granting the historian the right to make a choice among these causes; that is, to deal with only the most important. For by what criterion will he measure this importance? In the natural sciences there is a criterion whereby certain facts are selected for use: according to Henri Poincaré, "the facts that can be used a number of times, the facts that happen to recur". This rule does not apply to history; it assumes regularities which human actions do not afford. Thus it is commonly said that the subject-matter of history consists of facts in succession rather than recurring facts. And one searches in vain for any other criterion to guide the historian's choice among causes and conditions. The proper material of history consists of human actions just as they are given in empirical reality, and this material should be made use of without any eliminating from subjective motives. It will doubtless be said that the multiplicity and confusion of causes render the task practically impossible. Let us add that it is a task which no amount of thoroughness would enable to result in any synthesis, in any generalization that could be called "scientific".

The multiplicity of causes, their deep and hidden nature, are so many obstacles to the co-ordination of facts. But there is another obstacle which cannot be passed by in silence: *chance*, "accidental cause" as it has been termed, where relationship is indeterminate and the possible events indefinite in number. No one would deny that continuity can sometimes be discovered in the flowing and interlocking of historical events. But how are we to co-ordinate, unify, or systematize facts between which there is no tie and which follow one another in incoherent fashion?

Finally—and here I might have begun my criticism, for this consideration strikes at the very conception of a "scientific" history—there is *human freedom*. Man's will is the prime mover in the movements of history. Now if this will is free, and if its spontaneous energy must be taken into account, the idea of a rigorous chain of cause and effect in history must be abandoned. It is not possible to disentangle such a thing from the facts which history studies, and if it were possible it is not history that could do it. History, let me repeat, has the individual as its proper subject: the individual and only the individual makes history a distinct branch of research and study. It is this element alone which it does not share with other forms of intellectual activity.

Really scientific generalizations cannot be obtained in history either by induction or by deduction. *Really scientific*, I say. I am not unaware that the work of historians is often mixed with generalizations of a speculative, empirical, or derivative kind. But these are data foreign to history properly so called; they are data brought in from without.

The systematizing principle which history in itself lacks, the universal which it cannot attain, are in practice liberally provided for it by the historians themselves. To many of them an historical fact is merely matter awaiting form; awaiting an idea conceived *a priori* in their own minds or more or less well known and attested elsewhere. But this only reinforces my thesis. This customary presence in history of borrowed and anomalous ideas shows very well that it cannot be self-sufficient, that it cannot constitute a science by its own resources. If one man sees history as material for a sermon on democracy, another as an argument for pan-Germanism, a third as an excuse for parading his materialistic philosophy, it means that history taken by itself receives more than it gives, and suggests fewer ideas than it assumes as already established. Judging is difficult, but historical judgement is the most delicate of all. This is not surprising when we reflect that we are dealing after all with a study of the very human actions which are the central matter of psychology, of philosophy, of morality, and of the question of our origins and destiny. History raises far more problems than it can solve. In reality, it lives by principles that are anterior and superior to itself; doctrines obtained by other methods than its own; principles which it often implies, particularly in its judgements and its attempts at synthesis, but which it is powerless to establish.

The Aesthetic of Regionalism

John Crowe Ransom

During a summer in New Mexico the philosophical regionalist, as he secretly described himself, made two acquisitions: a scene which he witnessed with his own eyes, and a story which he received on good enough authority.

The scene first. The eastbound train out of Albuquerque, climbing into the mountains, winds through dry and scrubby country which has a certain fascination for green visitors from the green regions and looks incapable of supporting human life. This visitor was going to pull down his window shade and try simply to keep cool, when he was surprised by the sight of human habitation after all, and on a rather large scale: a populous Indian pueblo. A second appeared presently, and then another. One displayed a very good church, but all were worth passing that particular day for this reason: it was threshing time. On the outskirts of each town were the threshing-floors, evidently of home-made concrete and belonging each to a family or unit of the tribal economy. On the floors Indians were beating out the grain; on some the work was nearly done, the grain had been separated from the chaff and lay in a golden pile. The threshers were old and young, of both sexes, and beautifully arrayed. They laughed, and must have felt pleased with their deities, because the harvest was a success, and bread was assured them for the winter.

So this was regionalism; flourishing on the meanest capital, surviving stubbornly, and brilliant. In the face of the efforts of the insidious white missions and the aggressive government schools to "enlighten" these Indian people, their culture persists, though for the most part it goes back to the Stone Age, and they live as they always have lived. It may be supposed that they find their way of living satisfactory, and are so far from minding it that they prefer it above others, receiving from it the two benefits which a culture can afford. First, the economic benefit; for they live where white men could scarcely live, they have sufficient means, and they are without that special insecurity which white men continually talk about, and which has to do with such mysterious things as the price of wheat; they thresh, bake, and eat their own grain and do not have to suffer if they cannot sell it. And second, a subtler but scarcely less important benefit in that their way of living is pleasant; it "feels" right, it has aesthetic quality. As a matter of fact the Indian life in that one animated scene appeared to the philosophical regionalist one to be envied by the palefaces who rode with him in painful dignity on the steel train, reflecting upon private histories and futures, but neither remembering nor expecting anything so bright and charming as this.

And now the story. For several consecutive years an Indian tribe suffered from even drier seasons than usual and made insufficient crops. Their distress was such that a voice was raised for them in Congress and a sum of something like $20,000 appropriated for their relief. An agent of the Government came out to make the presentation, and sought the chief. To his surprise the chief did not jump for it; he was rather indifferent, but he agreed to call his counsellors together and deliberate. He reported later to the agent that the tribe would not accept the white man's money *because it would be bad for the young men.*

The interpretation which a philosophical regionalist might place upon this incident is not the one which would probably occur to the mere moralist or Puritan. It was not because the chief was too proud that he refused the white brother's favours, for he was too courteous not to accept them if they were well meant and if there was no harm in them. But the question was whether it was safe to entrust the young men with spending money, when they had never had much of it, if any, and did not live by money. What would they do with it? The chief knew that, while Indians compose in the mass a strong race, there are always weak-headed Indians, and these would want to take the money and buy white men's goods with it to import into the tribal life and corrupt it. The chief knew at least as much about this as did the philosophical regionalist, and the latter knew, having been instructed by his friends when he was going about making some small purchases of Indian things, that Indians are apt to set an inordinate value upon highly-coloured articles sold in the white ten-cent stores, which are less than trash when compared with the beautiful ornaments which Indian weavers, potters, and jewelers make; that Indian bucks fancy white men's shirts, which are unworthy of them; and that they are apt to part with anything in order to secure alarm-clocks. The chief must have looked with apprehension upon importations in general, knowing that a culture will decline and fall when the people grow out of liking for their own native products, and he drew the line at alarm-clocks.

He surrendered an economic advantage which entailed an aesthetic disadvantage; probably possessing firmly the principle that the aesthetic values are as serious as the economic ones, and as governing. Thereupon the philosophical regionalist, seeking to justify the title, regaled himself with certain reflections.

"The Indian of the Southwest is a noble specimen." That is a persistent saying, and every white traveler comes away repeating it—but on what ground? Noble in his hard-headed pride perhaps; and surely every traveler has seen some Indian brave in his gorgeous costume standing on the busy corner of the white city, aloof and disdainful, his arms folded, as if determined to give a public demonstration of his toleration of the whites before they can demonstrate how they tolerate him. Noble with a more positive merit too, for Indians lead a life which has an ancient pattern, and has been perfected a long time, and is conscious of the weight of tradition behind it; compared with which the pattern of life of the white men in that region, parvenus as they are, seems improvised and lacking in dignity. And noble because the Indians make their life precisely what it is, in every particular, whereas life for the white men depends on what they can buy with their money, and they buy from everybody, including the Indian. The superiority of Indians, by which term the philosophical spectator refers to their obviously fuller enjoyment of life, lies in their regionalism.

Regionalism is as reasonable as non-regionalism, whatever the latter may be called: cosmopolitanism, progressivism, industrialism, free trade, interregionalism, internationalism, eclecticism, liberal education, the federation of the world, or simple rootlessness; so far as the anti-regional philosophy is crystallized in such doctrines. Regionalism is really more reasonable, for it is more natural, and whatever is natural is persistent and must be rationalized.

The reasonableness of regionalism refers first to its economic, and second to its aesthetic.

A regional economy is good in the sense that it has always worked and never broken down. That is more than can be said for the modern, or the interregional and industrial economy. Regionalism is not exactly the prevalent economy today; it has no particular status in Adam Smith's approach to economic theory, which contemplates free trade, and which has proved very congenial to the vast expansions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; therefore regionalism suffers a disability. Yet just now, by reason of the crash of our non-regional economy, it tends to have its revival. Of the two economies, the regional is the realistic one. The industry is in sight of the natural resources of the region and of its population. The farmers support themselves and support their cities; and the city merchants and manufacturers have their eyes on a local market and are not ambitious to build up trade with the distant regions; perhaps it occurs to them that an interregional or world trade cannot be controlled. The quantity and quality of world trade which a given community carried on even as late as 1900 are probably changed beyond recognition now, for a great variety of reasons, of which some were predictable and others were not; but at any rate a community can be badly hurt by the storm, if it chooses to fish in the ocean. Regionalism offers an economy as safe as it is modest.

Now it must be great fun to produce on a grand scale, so long as there is consumption for what you produce. The philosophical regionalist is quite disposed to grant that, and to concede the importance of the producer's having fun. But too much fun runs to mischief. It is agreed now that producers' fun must be curtailed, and producers regulated, as if they were irresponsible boys, unable to be trusted with their freedom, and with their grandiose concept of trade as something which will always love them and take care of their production. The interregional business men of the future will not look like joyous producers so much as communistic ants and wasps; and as between the economy of big business and interregionalism, with its privations, and the old regional economy in which producers had every reason to be realistic, and could be left to their own discretion, there is indeed some show of reason for the latter.

The aesthetic of regionalism is less abstract, and harder to argue. Preferably it is a thing to try, and to feel, and that is what it is actually for some Europeans, and for the Indians of our Southwest. They do not have to formulate the philosophy of regionalism. But unfortunately regionalism for white America is so little an experience that it is often obliged to be a theory.

Coming to the theory, the first thing to observe is that nature itself is intensely localized, or regional; and it is not difficult to imagine that the life people lead in one of the highly differentiated areas of the earth's surface is going to have its differences also.

Some persons, with a sociological bias, suppose that the local peculiarities of life and custom, for example in the Southern highlands, are due to the fact that the population is old and deeply inbred, and has developed a kind of set because it has been out of communication with the world. Other persons, who are economists, think at once of the natural resources of the region, and the sort of subsistence it affords to its population, and find there the key to the cultural pattern. Both must be right; regionalism is a compound effect with two causes. But the primary cause is the physical nature of the region. A region which is physically distinct supports an economic unit of society; but its population will have much more of "domestic" trade than of foreign, and it will develop special ways and be confirmed in them.

As the community slowly adapts its life to the geography of the region, a thing happens which is almost miraculous; being no necessity of the economic system, but a work of grace perhaps, a tribute to the goodness of the human heart, and an event of momentous consequence to what we call the genius of human "culture". As the economic patterns become perfected and easy, they cease to be merely economic and become gradually aesthetic. They were meant for efficiency, but they survive for enjoyment, and men who were only prosperous become also happy.

The first settlers in a region are occupied with its conquest, and driven by a pure economic motive. Human nature at this stage is chiefly biological, and raw; physical nature, being harried and torn up by violence, looks raw too. But physical nature is perfectly willing to yield to man's solicitations if they are intelligent. Eventually the economic pattern becomes realistic, or nicely adapted to the bounty which nature is prepared in this region to bestow. It is as if man and nature had declared a truce and written a peace; and now nature not only yields up her routine concessions, but luxuriates and displays her charm; and men, secured in their economic tenure, delight in this charm and begin to represent it lovingly in their arts. More accurately, their economic actions become also their arts. It is the birth of natural piety: a transformation which may be ascribed to man's intuitive philosophy; by religious persons, such as Mary Austin, to the operation of transcendental spirit in nature, which is God. It is certainly the best gift that is bestowed upon the human species. The arts make their appearance in some ascending order, perhaps indicated like this: labour, craft, and business insist upon being transacted under patterns which permit the enjoyment of natural background; houses, tools, manufactured things do not seem good enough if they are only effective but must also be ornamental, which in a subtle sense means natural; and the fine arts arise, superficially pure or non-useful, yet faithful to the regional nature and to the economic and moral patterns to which the community is committed. It is in this stage that we delight to find a tribe of Navajos, or some provincial population hidden away in Europe.

For now the expert travelers come through, saying, Here is a region with a regionalism, and this is a characteristic bona fide manifestation of human genius. The region is now "made" in the vulgar sense (useless to a philosophical regionalist) that the curious and eclectic populations of far-away capitals will mark it on their maps, collect its exhibits for their museums, and discuss it in their literary essays. But for the regionalists who live in the region it is made already, because they have taken it into themselves by assimilation.

The regionalists receive the benefit of regionalism, not the distant eclectics; it is they who have the piety, and for whom the objects and activities have their real or pious meaning. This piety is directed first towards the physical region, the nature who has always given them sustenance and now gives them the manifold of her sensibilia. It is also directed towards the historic community which has dwelt in this region all these generations and developed these patterns. It is their region and their community, and their double attachment might well seem too powerful, and too natural, and also too harmless, to excite the wrath of any reputed philosophers; or it may be the envy, if the philosophers are so abstract and intellectual that they have never sufficiently felt such attachments; yet, whatever the motive be, some philosophers do actually represent themselves as aggrieved by it.

Cookery is one of the activities which go by regions. A cookery owes its form partly to the climate and to the natural foods of the region, and partly to the cumulative experimentation of the generations of native cooks; perhaps in equal measure. So with architecture, furniture, the decorative motif of interiors; so with clothing; so with the social pastimes and pageants; so with speech and idiom; and so with literature and other fine arts. Sometimes the tradition seems more the consequence of the region than of the community, or vice versa; but both have played their part; the region first, naturally, because it isolated the community. Critics of the arts, and of *objets d'art*, if they wish to be up to date, must now require themselves both to trace in them an adaptation to a special variety of physical nature, and also to find the patient historical development of local "schools" which produced them.

In contrast to the regional view that critics have learned to take of the arts, the broad or eclectic view now seems too fatuous. Eclectic minds are doubtless good for something, but they are very dangerous for the health of the arts. If their interest is in the arts they would be well advised not to carry their missionary zeal into the regions, for presently they will extinguish regionalism and have nothing to average up; then they will be without careers. And capital cities, which are the fortresses of eclecticism, should hardly be built and pushed on the assumption that they are to overrun and standardize all their regions. The city is a dangerous necessity in regional society. It is useful, and it is even creative in the way of aesthetic forms; for example, the architecture of capitols and landscaping of parks, the drama, and the other fine arts; in all of which it had better condescend to try to catch the genius of the hinterland. If it invites the patterns from too many regions, in an excess of hospitality, and tries to compose its arts out of perfectly average materials, its aesthetic life will become a mere formality and perish of cold, and then it will be left with a function which is strictly economic and gross. A capital of the world would be an intolerable city. And lesser cities, with more ambition than piety, which build grandly but upon indifferent and eclectic foundations, are nearly as bad. Cities lately are being zoned and planned; but in the planning, if it is not too late, they should aim at the centre of the aesthetic effect, which is regionalism; at the most, nationalism.

But it takes a long time for regionalism to arrive. It is the work of many generations, of which the earliest ones must live and die in war with the region, exploiting it, trying to impose their own economic wishes upon it, not yet knowing the sort of peace that would be lasting. What chance have frontiersmen, backwoodsmen, "colonials", of attaining to the completeness of life? What they may look forward to principally, if they are lucky, is livelihood. They bring ways and means which suit their old region but not the new region. Or they take pains to bring nothing, and to be open-minded, in order to learn as rapidly as possible; which is not very rapidly. Wherever the settlement of the New World has been undertaken by Europeans, it might have been promised at once that the new region would hardly become the seat of a culture comparable to that of the parent European region within any period which was not commensurate with some centuries of European history.

This latter proposition seems to the philosophical regionalist binding; on second thought perhaps too binding. It is true that the immemorial Europeans, those with acute perceptions and even those with the best will in the world, have looked repeatedly with honest deprecation upon their brethren the new settlers in America, Australia, or Argentina, knowing without having to reason about it that a Europe could not be improvised in these remarkable regions even if it could be realized in time. By their look and their tone, if nothing else, they have exhibited "a certain condescension in foreigners" and caused us much concern; we could not help resenting it, nor could they help feeling it. However rich they might believe American life to be materially, they could not yet believe it to be rich spiritually. Very largely they must have been right, and must still be right. Nor is it a great consolation to retort that what we lack in aesthetic attitude we make up in economic power, whereas the Europeans in more regions than one seem likely, for one reason or another, to be caught clinging to their attitudes when the economic structure tumbles down and pulls them with it, attitudes and all. If it is not becoming in Europeans to dislike us for our power, it is not becoming in us to wish economic evil upon them in order that their aesthetic superiority may be blotted out of our consciousness. Nevertheless, however that may be, it is just possible that we may have made or may be making a better and quicker job of regionalism than the Europeans allow for; than a dogmatic philosophical regionalist allows for. There may be a short cut.

What we have in this country, of course, is not so much a regionalism *de novo* as a transplanted regionalism, if that is possible. The Fathers of the Republic were not savages; or rather, since savages are likely to have a quite flourishing regionalism, they were not strictly business men. They were European regionalists, and they set about to apply to their new regions as much of their European regionalism as was applicable. New England they meant to be a Puritan England, Virginia an Elizabethan and royalist England. If they could not quite transfer their economic techniques, in such matters as building, tilling the soil, travel, and politics, they were more successful in transferring a language and some of the technique of the fine arts; which is as if to say that they had to erect a new house but were able to crown it for the time being with an imported capital. The matter of classical education, for instance, is a foreign matter for modern Europe as well as for ourselves; yet to some extent it has proved negotiable. We can use Greek, if we know it, in forming our poetry and politics, and we certainly have used it in forming our public buildings and our statues. We can also use English, French, Italian, and German models; but not so easily since the rise in us of that proper state of mind attested by our declarations of independence, because we must regard these cultures as competing and correlative ones, not as our archetypes. Now it must be remembered that what is Greek to us was native and nameless to the Greeks themselves, and not the same thing at all; and it enters into our regionalism only as some undigested Egyptian influence may have entered early into theirs. It should be a comfort to us, however, that we scarcely know for certain of any regional culture anywhere that can be called, in strictness, "indigenous". A regional culture ordinarily represents an importation, or series of importations, that has been lived with and adapted for so long that finally it fits, and looks "native". It may be ages before we can assimilate all the foreign modes that now conglomerate in what we call our American culture, and only then will they be really ours. In the meantime they will serve. Some of the regionalism which we have not had time to acquire we can borrow.

By the year 1850 our continental acquisitions were completed, and the settlement of North America, by a stock whose language and inheritance were largely British, was proceeding irregularly westward, region by region, and perhaps working faster with each advance. The momentum behind the advance was great, and the formula of settlement, or at least the formula of open-mindedness, was familiar; these being the conditions, if any, under which such work may be speeded up. The destiny of this enormous area must have seemed to the philosophical regionalists of the period to be roughly definable: to be comfortably occupied by a population which was now distinct, and was distinguished as "American"; but to fall culturally, as it fell physically, into a great number of regions, to which the general pattern of Americanism was to make its adaptations; that is, to develop culturally according to the implications of the political scheme, which was that of sovereign States within a federal Union. Naturally the States east, which were older as compared with the States west, and particularly with those empty areas west whose States were not yet born, were more highly developed; their economies more stable, and their mode of life more aesthetic. New England had achieved a rather strong regionalism. The South had done about as well, or if anything better. The peculiar institution of slavery set this general area apart from the rest of the world, gave a spiritual continuity to its many regions, and strengthened them under the reinforcement of "sectionalism", which is regionalism on a somewhat extended scale. But what New England and the South had done the other sections would do; and they might do it more quickly, though no philosophical sectionalist could be sure about that. The future was promising, though the futurist must look a long way ahead. The federal set-up for the development was admirable.

At about this time, however, the American varieties of regionalism, developing healthily, and at their uneven stages of development, came under a powerful destructive influence, and the philosophical historian of their subsequent course must bear witness that they have nearly been destroyed by it. This influence was not the dissension which resulted in the Civil War; that was destructive, but may now be regarded as one of the incidents in its march. It was nothing less than a whole new economy; it was industrialism, or the machine economy. It was European, and mainly English, in origin, and it was to have a baleful effect upon the charming regionalisms of Europe. But it was to be seized upon with almost mortal infatuation by the Americans; as if they were thinking that if they could not soon equal the Europeans at regionalism, they could distance them quickly at industrialism, and therefore they had better make a switch in their objectives. Only the South consistently opposed it, and may even now be said temperamentally to dislike it; yet the South was eventually to finger it too.

The machine economy, carried to the limit with the object of "maximum efficiency", is the enemy of regionalism. It always has been; not only at the present stage of affairs has the issue between them become really acute, and been raised specifically and publicly in many places; for example, in Southern communities, now agitated as to their proper alignment between the Southern "tradition" and the "new" industrialism. The industrialism is not new, but the awakening of the Southern communities to its menace is new.

The machine economy was bad enough in coming to America, where the regionalisms were at many different periods of growth, but it came to the perfected cultures of Europe with the disruptive force of a barbarian conquest, turning the clock back, cancelling the gains of many mellowing centuries. (Such strong terms will apply of course to those regions which sooner or later allowed the machine economy to take charge of things.) It is no wonder that a good many pious European thinkers have been appalled by a sort of havoc which was much less visible on this side, and which the pious American thinkers, if any, have therefore been at much less pains to think about.

The new economy restored to the act of labour the tension from which it had delivered itself so hardly and so slowly. It returned the labouring population, and in some degree the whole business population, to a strictly economic status; a status with which the Europeans were fairly unfamiliar, and which their history recorded only putatively as the possible status of serfs, or the possible status of the original savages fighting for subsistence; and a status in all respects more ignominious than that of pioneers and frontiersmen in America. For under this economy the labourer is simply preoccupied with tending his abstract machine, and there is no opportunity for aesthetic attitudes. And not much material for them, either, since it is now more and more the machine which makes the contact with nature and not the man. But most of the machines are concerned with processing the materials taken out of the land, and they are housed in factories, while the factories are housed in cities. Therefore the landed population tends to lose its virtue, and the population as a whole becomes more and more urbanized. Now a city of any sort removes men from direct contact with nature, and cannot quite constitute the staple or normal form of life for the citizens, so that city life is always something less than regional. But the cities of a machine age are peculiarly debased. They spring up almost overnight, a Detroit, an Akron, a Los Angeles. They are without a history, and they are without a region, since the population is imported from any sources whatever; and therefore they are without a character.

So painful a reversion must bear the promise of wonderful compensations, and it does. They define themselves in the new volume and multiplicity of the goods for consumption. But since the necessities of consumption were secured already in sufficient volume and multiplicity (sufficient in Europe, abundant in America) the additional volume and multiplicity must have reference to the luxuries; that is, to the hours of leisure and the pure aesthetic enjoyments. Here it must be said that, on the whole, the expectations of the moderns have been cheated. The products of machines may be used, but scarcely enjoyed, since they do not have much aesthetic character. Aesthetic character does not reside in an object's abstract design but in the sense of its natural and contingent materials, and the aesthetic attitude is piety.

The symbol of the aesthetic torpor and helplessness of the moderns lies in their money. There was never so much money in the world, never a time when goods and labours were so universally for sale; and never so little affection lavished on the products of region, which is natural enough when they do not have their real or private value for us but only the value which is determined by the universal market. It is the intention of the machine economy to furnish everybody with money, and then with a free market in which all the goods of the world will be purchasable. The consequence is that persons with much money, who set the standards of taste, go out and buy in with it the houses, furnitures, vases, educations, lectures and doctrines, foods and drinks, clothes and millineries, of all regions impartially; and people with less money do the same in their degree. To say that is simply to say that the age thinks it has discovered an aesthetic principle which is not regionalism.

The philosophical regionalist in conclusion is inclined to exhibit his good faith by professing his concrete or particular regionalism: an Upper South variety, less rich in many respects than the regionalism of Louisiana, which by virtue of its physical nature and its history is most distinct among the Deep South varieties. Traversing by car the east-and-west dimension of Tennessee, and the north-and-south or Delta dimension of Mississippi, he makes his way to Baton Rouge, startled equally by the distinctness and by the unassimilatedness of the regions entered and crossed, finally marvelling at the power of that interregional but sympathetic symbol, the South. There is too much economic settlement yet to be done in this section to permit him to point with too much pride, and in fact it would appear that during some large part of the period from 1865 to the present day the settlers have taken a holiday. In the Mississippi Delta he is forced to believe that the progress has been backward, as it has been in those unsouthern regions which have felt the extreme impact of the machine economy: what could be more like the homelessness of men in those regions than the life of this black population on this black land, resembling the life of a camp, forcing from nature an annual tribute of cotton and otherwise scarcely obtaining a single token of her usual favours? But in Louisiana it seems different.

The darkey is one of the bonds that make a South out of all the Southern regions. Another is the climate. The South is a place in which it is generally pleasant to be in the open air, and nature blooms and waxes prodigiously; one of the earth's areas most easily habitable by man, and perhaps, for the morale of the inhabitants, too easily. The large Negro population, the all-the-year farming—was it not inevitable that the South should develop a distinctly agrarian culture, whose farmers would dominate their cities, which could not be expected to be large? If the Southern cities are growing rapidly now it does not in the least reflect the intelligent consent of their hinterlands, which are the real South, but the coming of industrialism, which destroys the native tradition, and calls the traditionalists "reactionary". The South has had a noble tradition, as traditions go in these longitudes. But at the moment it is just coming out of being intimidated by the get-rich-quick element that has concentrated in its cities, and is only beginning to think about reviewing seriously its old tradition with the thought of a proper future.

The regionalism of Louisiana is most important for the South, in its still divided mind. The region is more charming than others naturally, with its live-oaks hung with moss, its sub-tropical flora, its waters, its soft air; and culturally, in the respect of the finish of its old French features, and its domestic architecture, which is not surpassed in the world.

But regionalism has to fight for its life in Baton Rouge, all the same, just as elsewhere. This fact is written where the least philosophical of regionalists may read it: in the stones. First of all, in the new buildings of the State University.* The old buildings still stand, or at least the "Barracks" do, in the heart of the city; the others had to go, since the city needed their room, and the University, with four thousand students, needed still more room and larger buildings. The old buildings are simple, genuine, and moving; precisely the sort of thing that would make a European town famous among the tourists. When the much larger plant of the new University was constructed it seems probable that buildings on the order of the Barracks but on the new scale would not have been economical, nor successful; therefore the builders conceived a harmonious plan for the campus in a modified Spanish, and it suits the regional landscape, and is not altogether foreign to the regional history.

But the visiting regionalist in Baton Rouge cannot escape its most famous feature: the State Capitol. It is nearly 500 feet high, bold in design, sumptuous in detail and finish, perfect in appointments, costing doubtless more money than a State Capitol ever did before—and extremely disconcerting to the sense of regional proprieties. It denotes power and opulence, and this is fitting for the architectural symbol of the State of Louisiana. But the manner of the expenditure of the millions of dollars that went into it was peculiarly unimaginative, like the manner in which money is inevitably spent by new men who have made their pile. The State of Louisiana took its bag and went shopping in the biggest market; it came back with New York artists, French and Italian marbles, African mahogany, Vesuvian lava for the paving. The local region appears inconspicuously in some bas-reliefs and statues, and in the alligators, pelicans, magnolias, sugar canes, and cat-tails worked in bronze in the gates and the door-panels. They are so ineffectual against the shameless eclecticism of the whole that the Louisiana State Capitol could almost as easily stand in Topeka or Harrisburg or Sacramento as in Baton Rouge.

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*This paper, in substance, was presented as a speech to the Graduate Club of Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge.

The State Capitol is a magnificent indiscretion. But the philosophical regionalist does not therefore despair. For many reasons; and because it occurs to him that the ironic perpetuation of the old Barracks, which stand in strange juxtaposition at the base of the Capitol, may bring to many half-hearted regionalists the understanding that what is called progress is often destruction.

William Morris: Distributist

W. P. Witcutt

It would ill befit us, who set ourselves up as the defenders of traditional and human things, to be lacking in filial piety, and to deny that pinch of incense which is their due to the spirits of our ancestors, who fought in the same wars. Generally speaking, Distributists are not thus unfilial—the *manes* of Cobbett has been many times placated. But it cannot be denied that we have been remiss in regard to William Morris; we have not sought out the things he has to tell us, and incorporated them into our synthesis. And it is due time this were done.

The purpose of this essay is then to demonstrate: first that Morris was not a mere æsthete, as is sometimes supposed, but that he possessed a definite and important body of truths necessary for the completion of Distributist philosophy; secondly that he was a Socialist only through a misunderstanding, and that his Socialism was contrary to his own first principles.

It is true that Morris was repelled by the modern world because of its ugliness. That is regarded as a mere emotional attitude, yet it was something more. It was a starting point. If a thing is astonishingly ugly there must be a reason for its astonishing ugliness, and Morris set out to find the reason. He approached the problem, as it were, from the æsthetic angle. Others have first been struck by the misery of the poor, or their lack of economic independence, or by the dangerous preponderance of the huge industrial cities.

Morris was first struck by the fact that everything was made worse—houses, tools, household goods, were no longer *beautiful*, as they had been in the past. The aspect of things had worsened. Even in the country

> . . . the very cowsheds and cart-stables, nay, the merest piece of farm engineering are tarred with the same brush. Even if a tree is cut down or blown away, a worse one, if any, is planted in its stead, and, in short, our civilization is passing, like a blight, over the whole face of the country, so that every change is sure to be a change for the worse in its outward aspect. [*Architecture, Industry, and Wealth.*]

Now why had the stone or timbered brick cottage been replaced by a jerry-built abomination, and the carven utensil by a thing which, if useful, was an offence to the eye? In a word, why had beauty vanished? Morris's answer was a simple and illuminating one. To make a thing beautiful is simply to put one's intelligence into it.

> Men whose hands were skilled in fashioning things could not help thinking the while, and soon found out that their deft fingers could express some part of the tangle of their thoughts, and that this new pleasure hindered not their daily work, for in the very labour that they lived by lay the material in which their thoughts could be embodied; and thus, though they laboured, they laboured somewhat for their pleasure, and uncompelled, and had conquered the curse of toil, and were men.

And thus the present ugliness of things is accounted for by the fact that work has been separated from intelligence, for the workman who is but a cog in the factory system cannot apply his intelligence to the task before him. He has but to perform his minute and monotonous task, or to look after the machine before him. No chance for him to vary to his liking the pattern the machine is spinning for him, or to carve a little gargoyle over the doorway of the house he is helping to build. So, said Morris, the general ugliness of things,

> all that external degradation of the face of the country . . . is hateful to me not only because it is a cause of unhappiness to some few of us who still love art, but also because it is a token of the unhappy life forced on the great mass of the population by the system of competitive commerce.

He demanded, therefore, a change in the method of production. He demanded the restoration of the use of their intellect to the workmen. He would have restored the craftsmen. And the machine? He would have used it to extinguish "all irksome and unintelligent labour, leaving us free to raise the standard of skill of hand and energy of mind in our workmen, and to produce afresh that loveliness and order which only the hand of man guided by his soul can produce". That was Morris's answer to the problem of machinery. Surely it is worth our notice.

Morris regarded this evil system of production, in which the hand of the workman was separated from his thought, as the result of producing for profit rather than for use. The Capitalist manufacturers, he found, cared nothing for the goods themselves, but only for what they could make out of them. That he regarded as the root evil.

His remedy? To us it seems a curious one. He would have turned all men into wage-earners, by abolishing private property. He became, in fact, a doctrinaire Marxian Socialist.

Now Marx, as Arthur Penty has pointed out, proposed the abolition of property because of his acceptance of the industrial system. He regarded Capitalism as a necessary stage in the development of the human race because it gave birth to the system of giant factories and giant machines, and which his ideal communist state would have taken over en bloc. He simply regarded the system of private property as a primitive organization of society, incapable of dealing with the great modern realities of large-scale production.

That William Morris, who would have abolished the system of large scale production and replaced it by a system of craftsmen, aided and emancipated by machinery, should have accepted this man's theories, is one of the ironies of history. Morris accepted Marx's conclusion without accepting his premises—an impossible situation.

It remains to show that the logical position for William Morris to have taken up was not Socialism but what we now call Distributism.

Morris regarded the profit-motive as the root evil of society. Now why does the Capitalist—who is more often than not an absentee shareholder—look to the profit rather than to the goods themselves? Simply because he has not made them himself. They are in themselves of no interest to him. His workmen have made them for him.

But if he had no workmen, or very few. If he made the goods themselves or personally supervised their making, if, in a word, a system of small producers replaced the present system, would that not make a difference?

The root problem is the problem of property. Restore the small man and you restore interest in the things made, rather than in the profits made. Restore that interest, and you are on the way to co-ordinating once more the brain and the hand, and bringing back beauty to the things made by man. So Morris's position follows logically from that of the Distributists. His place lies with us, and not with the Marxians, and so we claim him.

Sigrid Undset and the Critics

Dorothea Brande

The way of our reviewers with the books of Sigrid Undset is a most instructive performance to watch. To their credit it should be said that from the first the critics knew that in treating of her books they were reporting on the work of a great writer. But how difficult it is to review her as she merits and yet observe the prejudices and predilections which go to make up modernism. Sigrid Undset is a Christian, and she writes like a Christian. She believes in God. She believes in the freedom of the will. She believes in sin. She believes in the sanctity of marriage and the inviolability of the home. She believes in redemption and damnation. She believes, and shows, that the drama of salvation is the type-drama for all Christian people. She believes in responsibility, and in submission to spiritual authority. If one is going to read Undset at all, he will have to come to terms with these difficult concepts at least for the time it takes him to finish one of her books.

Fortunately for everyone, perhaps, the first of Fru Undset's books to have official publication in this country was the initial volume of her *Kristin Lavransdatter* trilogy, *The Bridal Wreath*, and undoubtedly the first praise she received here went to her partly through a misapprehension. If you are considerate enough to lay your novel in the mediaeval age of what most Americans consider a slightly backward country at best, you may say what you please about sin and salvation, suffering and sanctity, and it will be charged off to period quaintness. To be sure, we are more used to books designed to demonstrate some such notion as that King Arthur's knights were gullible hypocrites or that Joan of Arc was the first Protestant than we are to books which try as accurately as possible to give the life and thought of the past. But if we have a virtue it is that we respect evidences of scholarship. Fru Undset knew her period to its humblest utensil, and she was writing of her own country. So what must have seemed to many a reviewer like the crude Christianity of the book was allowed to pass under the same grant of indulgence which was accorded to her report of the crude table manners of that day.

The two remaining volumes of *Kristin* were issued, and then the first of the *Master of Hestviken* tetralogy. Towards the end of the series there were signs of critical restlessness: Undset, while scrupulously observing artistic detachment, gave no real evidence that she thought her characters quainter than she thought her contemporaries, or found their dilemmas more artificial than ours. It began to appear that she felt, on the contrary, that their plight and ours was identical. Here and there a critic muttered uneasily in his review that Sigrid Undset was humourless enough to take these matters of sin and retribution really to heart, and the news that she was a convert to the Roman Catholic faith began to make its appearance with fair regularity whenever her work was under consideration. Then she received the Nobel Prize for Literature, and that was reassuring. The bestowal of that prize is frequently a little puzzling, but it has seldom gone to anyone who was not in the advance guard of the moderns.

Presently there was a silence, followed by the rumour that Undset was at work on a modern novel. And then, in 1931, came *The Wild Orchid*.

But *The Wild Orchid* was no modern novel at all. It was a novel about Norwegians living in our own time, and talking and acting remarkably like Americans and Englishmen of the same period, but that doesn't make a "modern novel". This author was steadily affirming that she had meant what she had said all along: that men were men and women women, today as well as seven centuries ago; that we fall into error, we suffer, we learn, we have our choice of ultimate ends today as then; that in human society certain things are eternal, and will remain whether or not we agree to ignore them; that there is right action and there is wrong action, there is intellect guided by conscience to discriminate between them and free will to enable us to make our choice, today and forever.

How fortunate that the reviewers had read the earlier books! It was easy to demonstrate, by recourse to them, that Undset, great as she was, had become bogged in her special period. She was a mediaevalist at heart, and had neglected to notice how the world had changed—that women were free now, and that religion was outmoded. Sadly for this theory, one of the best-drawn characters in the book was a woman who talked in just that way. As a matter of fact, Julie, who was no heroine to her creator, might have been the approved heroine of almost any other novel published in the last twenty years, without having a word of her speech altered. She would have made a figure of consummate contemporary nobility—a woman so set on her personal freedom that she sacrificed her marriage purely on principle.

You might call Sigrid Undset a mediaevalist if you chose, but she was most uncomfortably familiar with all the stock slogans—and unimpressed by them. Well, thank heaven, since that charge wasn't enough to dispose of her ideas, there was, in *The Wild Orchid* and its sequel, *The Burning Bush*, an even better excuse for cavilling at her. It was all very well to torture the characters in the early books with pictures of heaven and hell, and to show them terrified of the judgement of God, but surely no one could take the same state of mind seriously in a modern character. Yet Fru Undset's hero becomes a communicant of the Catholic Church. Everyone knew what that meant: it meant that he "escaped".

There is no charge like that one in the modern reviewer's equipment. Any author or character who shows a belief in any form of traditional wisdom is an "escapist". It made no difference that Fru Undset's hero, by embracing Christianity, after having had the advantage of a purely agnostic upbringing at the hands of an emancipated mother, embraced also a life of responsibility: committed himself to preserving and doing his best to improve a youthful and unfortunate marriage; remained in his country when he would gladly have taken refuge in travel; sacrificed the sympathy of many of those who were dearest to him. By what possible distortion of an original meaning can "escape" be made to cover such action as this? Yet the word was used again and again, usually this very phrase: "Her hero escapes into the Church". To the honour of the critics, not one of them retracted his earlier judgement as to Undset's standing, even while he excused and explained and psycho-analyzed her reactionary tendencies.

But now comes the hardest book of all to swallow.* It is a little as though Sigrid Undset had decided that she would put matters so plainly as to force the issue. This time her heroine joins no Church, nor has she the benefit of a mediaeval background. She is a woman of modern Norway. Little more than a child she married a sentimental, lazy, boasting boy. She made, that is, a choice. If she had been a member of a united family, if she had had the support and protection of a watchful church, or of a sound society, the chances are that she would have made no such mistake. Any other writer telling Ida Elisabeth's story would probably, after putting her heroine through a period of discomfort and unhappiness, have rewarded the innocence of intention and absolved her of all responsibility for her unfortunate choice. This author does not. Her heroine is courageous, she is honest, she is hard-working. None of these things avails to cancel her error fully. When her husband is as trivially unfaithful to her as he was trivially devoted, she leaves him. She makes a secure and happy home for herself and her two surviving children. She divorces her husband; and for the first time she falls in love. But she does not remarry. Not because she is coerced by a religion, for she is not religious; not because society demands it of her—quite the contrary: none of her friends or family but believes in the admissibility of remarriage. She does not remarry because she discov-

* IDA ELISABETH *by Sigrid Undset* (KNOPF. 410 pp. $2.50).

ers from experience, from life itself, that the older tradition was right. A better, clearer, or fairer exposition with less special pleading has seldom been made.

This time the chorus of praise was more subdued. Impossible to pretend that this was a minor or unsatisfactory book if the others had been worth praise. Like all Undset's novels it presented a microcosm, with characters so varied, so fully drawn, so well used that they would have stocked another novelist for a lifetime. Undset's purely feminine eye for the minute, the humble detail which carries conviction, is as unerring here as in the mediaeval volumes. Her scenes, her use of weather, her contrasts of setting are still masterly. No better book was published during the year.

But there is an almost querulous note now in the criticism. She is great, but she is so discomfitting: there is just a hint that the reviewers wish she would not say the same things again and again, although the charge of monotony certainly cannot be laid at her door. But "She cocks a sour eye at adultery", as one critic puts it, incredulously and plaintively; it is hard to understand an author like that.

Thus far in her unrelenting battle to make her readers understand that she means all she says, and more, of the tragedy of lives divorced from the old realities and of the hope that remains since the realities cannot die, Sigrid Undset has not won. She has vitality and conviction; there is no doubt she has patience; she has infinite ingenuity, which will supply her for years to come with variant metaphors for her reiterated truths. There is just a possibility that the day will come when "modernism", although it may not admit defeat, may be granted a moment of insight. We may live to see a day when some reviewer will realize, and will say, that Sigrid Undset is great not in spite but because of the fact that she writes as a woman and a Christian; for that is the basis of her greatness. Her writing is mature, candid, and direct because she knows where she has taken her position. She is less interested in nostalgia than in the reasons for it. Romantic love is to her the prelude to marital love, and it is wise or foolish only in so far as the deeper relation which springs from it is sound or unhealthy. Even the Church, even religion, appear in her books in that aspect which is most important to a woman: as the safeguards of the home, the bulwark of marriage, the eternal enemies of corruption. The work of such a writer is timeless. If this age will not abandon its inconsistency, admitting her greatness while denying the fountainhead of her genius, perhaps another will be more wise, and we shall be judged fortunate to have had, even though we did not fully prize her, one great author.

God Ho!

José Ortega y Gasset

In the Earth's orbit there are perihelion and aphelion: a time of maximum proximity to the Sun and a time of maximum recession from it. If an astral observer should behold the Earth at the moment when it runs away from the Sun, he would think that our planet would never come back beside it, but that each day, into eternity, it would drift away farther and farther. But if he should wait he would see the Earth, bending its course by a gentle deflection of its flight, return by and by toward the Sun, as does the dove to the dovecote and the boomerang to the hand of its thrower. In the orbit of history something of the same kind happens to the mind with relation to God. There are times of *odium dei*, of complete flight from the divine, during which this enormous promontory of God all but disappears from the horizon. But eventually there come occasions when, with the fresh charm of a virgin coast, to leeward there suddenly looms the cliff of divinity. The present hour is of such a character, and from the maintop the cry may well resound: God ho!

There is no pietism—there is not even religion—in all this. Without implying the least disrespect for religions, it is opportune to rebel against the monopoly of God which they usually maintain. This fact, on the other hand, is not strange: when all the other activities of culture abandon the theme of the divine, only religion continues to treat of it, and every one comes to forget that God is, as well, a secular affair.

Religion consists in a set of specific acts which the human being addresses to the higher reality: faith, love, prayer, worship. But this divine reality has another side, on which other mental acts quite foreign to religiosity may flourish. In this sense, we may speak of a lay God, and this God, or aspect of God, is the one that is now in sight.

This periodic appearance and vanishment of the divinity may surprise those who think that it is enough that something exist and be visible for us to see it. It is not commonly realized to what extent, in order to see certain things, we have to become blind to others. The human mind is narrow indeed: at each moment it has room for only a few objects. If we wished to be aware of all the visible things before us in the room where we are, we should perceive none. We cannot see without looking, and to look is to fix the eye upon certain objects, ignoring, *overlooking*, the rest. Sight is controlled by attention, and attention to a thing means, also, lack of attention to others. As of sight, so of the whole mind. The mental ray illumines an object at the cost of plunging all the rest in darkness. It is not sufficient, then, that something be present in space for us to perceive it: it is necessary for the perceiving organ to look for it and adapt itself to its scheme. The eye adapts itself to the long or the near view, to what is to the right or what is to the left. But, in turn, this muscular accommodation of the eye is a result of the attentional adaptation of our entire consciousness, which is the true organ of perception.

Like a huge panorama, the whole universe is ever exposed to our view; but at each hour only a portion of it exists for us. The attention of man wanders like a searchlight over the vast expanse of reality, bringing out now this thing, now that. This shifting of his attention constitutes the history of man. An epoch is nothing but a certain attentional régime, a system of preferences and postponements, of clairvoyance and blindness. So that, by limning the silhouette of its attention, we define an epoch.

The one immediately preceding ours was characterized by a very curious attentional economy, which may be summed up as "agnosticism". This was the designation it invented for itself, with a great feeling of complacency. The negativeness of the term is of course rather funny. It is as if one called oneself Not-Peter or Not-John. And, in fact, agnostic means "he who does not want to know certain things". We are dealing, it seems, with a type of soul that puts caution and prudence before everything else: avoidance before enterprise, certainty before discovery. And it turns out that the things which the agnostic pleases to ignore are of no small account, but precisely those which are ultimate and primary: the decisive things.

It is now beginning to be difficult for us to revive such a state of mind. For the agnostic's attitude does not consist in proclaiming the immediate and "positive" reality as the only one that exists (which would be meaningless); on the contrary, he recognizes that the immediate reality is not the complete reality—that beyond the visible world there must be something, but of such a nature that it can not be reduced to experience. In view of this, he turns his back on the "ultraworld" and dismisses every thought of it.

The consequence is that the agnostic landscape has no background. It is all on the same plane, it flouts the elementary laws of perspective. It is a myopic landscape, a mutilated panorama. All that is primary and decisive is left out. The attention is fixed exclusively on the secondary and the fleeting.

With plausible appeals to common sense, the quest for the secret of ultimate things, of the "fundamental" things, is renounced, and the eye is kept exclusively on "this world". For "this world" is what remains of the universe when we have taken from it all that is fundamental; it is therefore a world without foundation, rootless, baseless—a floating islet adrift on a mysterious element.

The agnostic man is an organ of perception adapted solely to the immediate world. We can comprehend so strange an attentional régime by contrasting it with its opposite: gnosticism. The gnostic, of course, starts from a profound loathing for "this world". This invincible loathing for the sensuous has been one of the most interesting phenomena of history. We can see in Plato the beginnings of this antipathy, which was to rise like an unconquerable tide. In the first century the whole Mediterranean East becomes drunk with aversion for the world of matter, and like a caged beast searches everywhere for the opening that gives escape. Human souls can find a congeniality in the otherworldly that is surprising in its exclusiveness and intensity. Only the divine exists for them; that is to say, that which in essence is remote, mediate, transcendental. The bitterness towards "this world" is such that gnosticism is even unwilling to admit that it is the work of God. Thus, for example, one of the most admirable characters of early Christianity, Marcion, is firm in believing that the world is the work of a perverse being, arch-enemy of God. It follows that the true creation of the true God is "redemption". To create was an evil doing; the part of goodness, of divinity, is to *uncreate;* that is, to redeem.

The gnostic landscape is the inverse of the "positivist". It is made up exclusively of an ultimate background, it lacks the nearer view; it is, essentially, an "other" world. So, while the word of the agnostic is "experience"—which means attention to "this" world—the vocable dear to the gnostic is "salvation", which means escape from this world and preoccupation with the other.

As against these two contrasting and equally exclusive preferences, it is possible for the attention to settle on an intermediate line, the line which marks the boundary between the two worlds. The line on which "this world" ends belongs to it and is, therefore, of a "positive" nature. But, at the same time, that line marks the beginning of the other world and is, in consequence, transcendent. All the special sciences at present find themselves, of inner necessity, pushed against this line of their own ultimate problems, which are also the first of the great science of God.

Translated from the Spanish by **Noel Llorens**

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The Fascist Idea in Britain

W. E. D. Allen

More than ten years have elapsed since that march on Rome which established a revolutionary Fascist Government in power over the Italian peninsula. Fascism seemed, at that time, to be a spontaneous and intellectually unorganized reaction against certain conditions which were peculiar to the post-War situation in Italy. The very spontaneity of its development over a brief period of time in the din of factory brawls, sudden ambushes, and confused street-fighting, its sweep of a great nameless mass-movement out of nowhere, took the orthodox students of politics and the social theorists unawares and found them incapable of appraising its significance. For Fascism appeared, even in its initial stage when half Italy did not comprehend it, to be something far deeper than the "Blanquism" of Spain and the Latin-American republics, something more potent than the ineffectual Liberal-military reaction which had just suffered such complete eclipse in Russia. Even Mussolini—that occasional phenomenon of the ages which embodies a synthesis of the "man of action" and the serene philosopher—appears earlier to have failed to appreciate the import of the movement which he had invoked, when he preferred to regard Fascism as peculiarly Italian in character. It was only later, when Fascist political and economic theory began to transform the character of Italian life, when the Fascist ideal awoke the Italian nation to a sustained devotion, and when the Fascist conception had proved sufficiently urgent to inspire a national revolutionary movement in Germany, that it was generally admitted that, for good or ill, a new idea had been called forth which was to mould or to modify the destinies of the twentieth century.

Fascism, both as a philosophical concept and as a political creed, differs from the various brands of Liberal-Rationalist democratic thought, from Socialism and from Communism, in that it has behind it no elaborate pedigree of theory. That expression of the mind of a war-hardened, disillusioned generation is shocking to the pedant, as it emerges, raw and ruthless, out of the wreckage of the world of the last century. If we may be permitted an historical comparison which may seem somewhat obscure, the new crude creed of Islam which ran like fire through the heterogeneous communities of the Byzantine-Magian world must have appeared equally unreal, unreasonable, and incomprehensible to the pedants and wiseacres of Constantinople, Ctesiphon, and Alexandria. Yet Islam, in its day, was a young, realist, "protestant" creed, cutting through the fictions and the fancies of an older world. It, too, had revolutionary economic bases, a physical fire, and a spiritual urge to creative action.

The political and economic aspects of Fascist belief are now fairly well known, even if—outside Italy and Germany—they continue to be both misrepresented and misunderstood. Nationalism—the idealization of the nation as the supreme synthesis of a group of individuals with a communion of linguistic and historical traditions and of regional and economic interests—is, of course, not peculiar to Fascism. Nationalism was strongly developed both in pre-War Liberal Europe and particularly in the post-War democratic (and mostly Socialist) republics which emerged as political entities after the War. Nationalism is, indeed, a definite characteristic of our modern European civilization in contrast to the civilizations of the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East, which preceded it. It probably arises from certain fundamental conditions of geography which have controlled the direction in which the various European cultures have developed towards the present stage of civilization.

The Fascists have at once expanded and stabilized the conception of Nationality. In fact, their idealization of the nation represents a reaction against the demoralizing effects of the mechanistic conditions of life which the uncontrolled development of modern capitalism has produced. In this respect the attitude of Fascist thought, both in Italy and Germany, may be compared with the movements inspired by Gandhi in India and by De Valera in Ireland. The Irish and Indian movements, each in its way, constitute definite reactions against the mechanistic conception of life, but they differ from the German and Italian movements in that they are more politically ingenuous, and at the same time more pessimistic. Both Gandhi and De Valera have shown lack of original political inspiration in that they seek to adopt and to adhere to political methods which have already proved outworn and ineffectual. At the same time they turn their backs altogether on the machine. They revert in hopelessness to the land and to small industry. They bury their heads in the Irish bogs and the Indian jungle, invoking the old gods of the Gael and the Hindu to save them from the horrors of the modern world.

The Italians and the Germans, more sophisticated and instinctively more practised, show the vigorous determination of building and conquering races. They do not hope to escape from the Machine, they do not want to smash it, but they are determined to master and to use it as the servant of their nations. The mastery of the Machine involves the mastery of innumerable technical and economic problems, and by implication, the control and transformation of the Capitalist System, which is, in fact, the Machine in Action. Capitalism is fundamentally unnational and international, and Fascist Nationalism, which requires the control and ordering of the Nation as a unit of disciplined life, must in its struggle with Capitalism—in its effort to master the Machine—adopt a strictly national basis, at least during a protracted period of transition. The great majority of modern men and women recognize the economic necessity for the radical transformation of the present system of production and consumption. They yearn also, with less definite knowledge of themselves, for some interpretation of the world in which they live, which shall give them stability, poise, outlets for their energies, and some reasonable degree of happiness. Fascism answers them, first, by a reversion to the old values. It raises up the nation as a supremacy for which to live in constancy rather than to die heroically. It respects the old primal values and holds in honour the continuing traditions of the Nation. At the same time, Fascism is revolutionary in its emphasis on discipline, that fine mean which the plutocrats threw down, to the democratic applause of those poor mobs whom they were about to chain to the Machine. Fascism is again revolutionary in its mastering contempt for the formulas and theories by which the old "democratic" groups have bought themselves the freedom to waste and to abuse the government of their respective countries. In sweeping away the inhibitions of Democracy, they have ranged from the muzzling of a millionaire-owned "free" press to the sterilization of the unfit.

But the emphasis of Fascism on the conception of the nation does not preclude that Universalism which is the antithesis of Internationalism. A revolutionary movement, developing in different countries as the expression of the will-to-power of a generation already decimated by war, would hardly seem likely to envisage the initiation of new wars as the overriding objective of its inspiration. This, however, is the interpretation put on the Fascist conception of the Nation by such recent Social Democratic critics as Mr. John Strachey. Neither Mr. Strachey nor his book is essentially important, but as a pathological type he is of some little interest as a specimen of the "bourgeois" democratic mind at a certain stage of dissolution. The mentality of the governing class, and of their intellectual parasites, in the countries in which Democracy has become the existing political system, is conditioned by what we may describe as "the surrender complex". The historical causes of this peculiar attitude of mind may be traced to the fact that the democratic system of government, to which the political classes of the West profess complete allegiance, itself derives from periods of class-revolution, during which the small but rising groups of commercial capitalists were impelled to advocate the subversion of state authority in order to establish the dominance of their own sectional interests.

Mr. Stirling Taylor, in his admirable *Modern History of England*, has adequately developed this theme. In the great days of the Tudors and their succession of competent and ruthless ministers were laid the foundations of a national state and of a seriously planned economy. In those brilliant days of English history the control and regulation of capital was a definite aim of state policy. The economic freedom of the individual–freedom, that is, from starvation–was assured by a system of provision for and control of the conditions of labour, and assistance for the destitute, which was without parallel in contemporary Europe. Had the Elizabethan system been maintained the coming of the Industrial Revolution and of the Age of Mechanics might have been a slower process, but it must undoubtedly have been steadier and more ordered. But against the weaker hand of the Stuarts the rising "bourgeois" class mutinied in greedy wrath. Mr. Stirling Taylor shows in a few memorable pages that the reforms of Strafford, and particularly his enlightened measures for the relief of poverty in the North, brought down upon his head the vengeance of Parliament. English history has been written for so long by Whig historians that we can hardly discern now that the struggle for the "Freedom of the Englishman" in the Parliamentary Wars was in great degree a rather sordid struggle for the "Freedom of the Market". The City of London financed the Parliamentary armies who overthrew the national monarchy and set up, in effect, a system of group-dictatorship, through the corridors of the House of Commons, of the new "bourgeois" capitalist power.

From the scaffold of King Charles the victorious Whigs marched in triumph into the nineteenth century. The Tories harassed their flanks, and occasionally, in war periods when the imposition of some degree of national discipline became inevitable, grasped the power. But with the final elimination of the balance between industry and agriculture and the political extinction of the landowning class, Tory patriotism came to be almost indistinguishable from Whig commercial imperialism. The old Tory party and the landowning interest—with all their faults—were of their very nature national. They were interested in the land of England. Commercial capitalism is, on the other hand, essentially internationalist. "Free Trade", for which the Whig democrats always stood, implies in its essence "Freedom of the Market"—"Freedom for Capital". If one flies in an aeroplane today over the wide land of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland one sees that those who cared so greatly for the "Freedom of the Market" cared not at all for the well-being of their country. The Highlands have been depopulated, as if by plague. The farming lands of England are being deserted, as if from invasion. Ireland has been thrown away, as not worth the holding.

The same political and economic policy of "laissez-faire" which sacrificed the land to international trade was led, when circumstances required, to sacrifice industry also. The replacement of "paternal industry" by the stock corporation has achieved the final emancipation of capital. The capitalist who takes the trouble to pick up his telephone can switch his capital literally "from China to Peru". Capital remains within the authority of no national government—it is supremely international. Just as Parliamentary democracy proved to be the political product of Capitalism in an earlier stage of development, so Internationalism becomes the political corollary to the attainment of international "Freedom for Capital". The one grew out of that legalized anarchy of group-interests which resulted from the overthrow of national-state authority in the "bourgeois" democratic revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The other requires the complete subordination of the national state to the interests of international capital, and brings with it the ultimate degradation of the European nations among whom the Industrial Revolution first took shape, to the economic level of those backward nations who represent at once the cheap labour and the markets of the East.

It would be quite unscientific to pretend that the complicated historical process which we have outlined is the result of a policy which has been consciously followed by the succeeding generations of the governing class, even since the latter part of the last century, when men like Disraeli and Rhodes foresaw the ultimate culmination and uttered their unattended warnings. A revolution, such as the "bourgeois" revolution of the seventeenth century, and its economic sequel—the so-called Industrial Revolution—not only creates its own theoretical background, its series of interpretations, but a whole miswritten history of its own. And many generations of men, some single-minded patriots in their own consciousness, others seeking the perpetuation of their own class predominance with the cunning of instinct, have worked to the blind end that the Internationale of Wealth shall rise above the desert fields of England. Parallel with the governing class, at once antagonistic and supplementary to them—in fact, parasites upon the system which they pretend to aim at altering—are the professional leaders of the working class. Mr. Strachey, in an earlier book—which was as profound as his present essay on Fascism is superficial—has shown how the interests of the Social Democratic leaders and the Liberal capitalists are ultimately common. The Social Democrats, of their very nature, can only function within the framework of the democratic capitalist state and are dependent on it. History has illustrated this with her conclusive cynicism in the Russian Revolution of the period March-October 1917, and in the first German Revolution of November-December 1918. The more recent fate of the German Social Democrats and of the British Labour Party confirms the inherent impotence of Social Democracy to emancipate itself or to distinguish itself from its more genteel sister Liberalism. The posturings of that fashionable barrister, Sir Stafford Cripps, on the subject of Dictatorship, only appear the more ridiculous when we observe his seniors and predecessors of the Labour Party safely ensconced as the chiefs of a Liberal-Labour-Tory coalition.

The bases of Social Democracy lay in the subversion of the authoritarian states of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and when a system which finds its original justification in a subversive philosophy is forced to formulate a methodology of power, that methodology can only be developed in terms of surrender. The Whigs themselves, representing ill-disciplined factions in the possession of irresponsible power, were impelled by inevitable tendencies to develop a political machine which extended to the wider and more incoherent factions of the people vast and vague powers of intervention which they had neither the capacity nor the intelligence to use. With the surrender of their sectional prerogatives, the governing class, practised at least in politics, were impelled to develop the ingenious technique of government by deception, for it is only by deception that the implications of surrender may be avoided. As, under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, an increasing proportion of the population became detached from the land and from interest in the ownership of small properties, and as a new generation grew up as the mere tenders of machines, an animosity against private property developed among the great masses of the people who had been deprived of all association with direct ownership. The development of mass-production tended to restrict the opportunities for real economic independence among each new generation of individuals, and as men became less independent in their private lives, they were fobbed off by the concession of a greater degree of political "liberty"—at once useless to themselves and dangerous to the state.

Under the Tudors England was going through a process of national integration, and the policy of the

Cecils extended that process to Britain as a whole. Throughout the democratic period the tendencies to disintegration have been cumulative, in contrast to the reverse process which was taking place throughout the nineteenth century in imperial Germany, and to a lesser extent in nationalist Italy. Politically this process is the direct result of the democratic methodology of surrender, and it has reached finality in relation to India and Ireland, where a panic policy of almost forcible disintegration has been pursued by the British political class. The whole process of political disintegration, which appears to be a definite phase in the history of every imperial society, has been interestingly considered by Mr. Raven in his *Civilisation as Divine Superman*. He treats the process as biological, and hardly differs in the pessimism of his conclusions from the author of *The Decline of the West*. But Fascist thought holds that even if the Raven-Spenglerian analysis be accepted as a relatively incontrovertible interpretation of past history, our present European civilization, as the master of vast scientific resources which were not available to the men of previous cultures, can overcome the diseases inherent in its hitherto uncontrolled development. Modern man is at least within reach of knowing himself.

The first problem is a political one—the mastery of the state. Only when the state has passed into the hands of those of its citizens who are prepared through discipline to submit themselves and to sacrifice their own individual interests utterly to the service of the nation, only then can these masters of the state turn to the more formidable problem of the mastery of the

Machine—and the process of mastering the Machine implies, of course, the complete subordination of Capital, which is, in fact, the Machine, in so far as the Machine is conscious, functioning, and alive. The cult of the State is not a Fascist end in itself. As Hitler has explained in *Mein Kampf*, "the main principle which we must observe is that the state is not an end, but a means. It is the foundation on which higher human culture is to rest, but it does not originate it. It is rather the presence of a race endowed with capabilities for civilization which is able to do this".

The negation of Democracy, the complete repudiation of the orthodox "game for power", which is inherent in Fascist political philosophy, has frightened and inflamed the exponents of Social Democratic theory into paroxysms of hysterical dialectic. Mr. Strachey, who is a very typical specimen of "the relaxed mind" of the English "bourgeois" intellectual in its disintegrating phase, has started to scream that "Fascism Means War". It is characteristic of the confused throbbing which passes for thinking among these people that in setting out to write a book on the "Menace of Fascism" Mr. Strachey has not even taken the trouble to study the speeches, or even the party affiliations, of the men whom he selects for attack. He takes a few obscure extracts from speeches made not long after the war by Mussolini, and ignores all reference to the Duce's great "peace speech" at Littoria, while at the same time he passes over the Italian disarmament proposals and the important implications of the Four Power Pact. He identifies the German conservative leaders, Von Papen and Hugenburg, quite erroneously with Nazi party policy, and relegates Hitler's remarkable analysis of the European situation before the Reichstag to a footnote. It is, of course, by no means extraordinary that the Social Democrats are of their very nature the most stupid type of war-mongers (anti-Slavery, Armenian Massacres, "Self-Determination", League "intervention", etc.). To the sedentary man war can always remain a subject for sentimental hysteria, since it is not likely to become for him an unpleasant personal reality.

We have already observed that the fact that Fascism represents in every country, to a greater or less extent, a revolutionary movement of war-veterans should establish the truth that further wars can hardly be a primary objective of the supporters of Fascist movements. The Fascist tendency in economics to concentrate on the consolidation and development of the internal resources and life of the countries in which Fascism has come to power should further exclude the necessity of war, which generally arises—in terms of Social Democratic analysis—from the frictions engendered by the conflict of rival capitalist interests. Fascism does imply a most astounding economic revolution, which, if it succeeds, will be found to have altered the whole basis of world trade as it has developed during the last century, and which will introduce profound modifications into the inter-relations of national states. But Fascism, which is a European movement directed towards the revival of European culture, does not and cannot envisage a European war which would bring in its train the destruction of that culture, which to Fascism is the most precious creation of the human mind. To the disintegrant Internationalism of Social Democracy, Fascism opposes the concept of an integral Universalism, which, building around the old and sure foundations of European racial culture, shall assure to Europe, peace—and to the world, order.

Sir Oswald Mosley, when he was moving towards Fascism, said, in a telling phrase which has now become almost hackneyed, that we could not delay the reorganization of the life of Great Britain "until every Hottentot had joined the I.L.P." This phrase in effect appraises the attitude of Fascist Nationalism to Internationalism. The nations who have contributed to the creation of European culture must not destroy and betray that culture in internecine struggle. They can combine in the cause of their own destinies, and in the defence of their peoples against political demoralization and economic degradation. But there are powers in Europe whose peoples are physically confined, and who seek a natural expansion for their national life beyond their existing frontiers. If these powers are not to be impelled by circumstance to turn in upon their neighbours within the European community they must seek relief in alternative directions. And it is not the business of Englishmen, nor is it in the interests of British policy, to continue to preserve the immunity of the plague-spots of the world.

The historical events of the last ten, and more particularly of the last two, years have established Fascism as a European movement of the greatest scope and significance. It was fashionable at one time to treat Fascism as a purely local expression of the Italian political genius. The accession to power of a Fascist party in the German Reich has disturbed the calculations of even the most optimistic advocates of Social

Democracy as the ultimate expression of human political capacities. In the lesser European states, notably in Hungary, Finland, Holland, and Austria, Fascism is proving that it makes a wide appeal to all sections of the nation, irrespective of class. Even in France, the hitherto impregnable stronghold of Social Democratic theory and practice, there is developing a strong tendency towards a "fascisme du gauche". England and America, the original hearths of Parliamentary democracy, and the strongest fortresses of financial capitalism, remain as yet apparently firm in their confidence in the efficacy of their long-tried methods of government. But in America the new Roosevelt Administration is attempting to introduce many of the methods of Fascist economics in an emergency effort to reorganize American industrial life. The explanation why it would appear impossible to carry out a Fascist economic policy without the framework of a Fascist state is not within the scope of this paper. The Americans have always been remarkable for a political ineptitude and a slipshod idealism, from the most disastrous effects of which they have been saved by the illimitable natural resources of their own country. The European nations, including Great Britain, cannot afford to remain satisfied with an economic system which is proving unworkable, and with political methods which—whatever their past merits in earlier circumstances—now appear to be not only obsolete but incapable of sustaining the confidence of the peoples who are called upon to operate them.

The influence of Whig historians on the political outlook of succeeding generations of Englishmen has lent the stability of fact to the popular delusion that

Parliamentary institutions are the peculiar product of the Nordic Protestant mind, and that these institutions are particularly adapted to the English genius. In actual historic fact it can be shown that the origin of representative institutions cannot be located in any one country, and that, like feudalism, Parliamentarism had its beginnings in the special economic and social conditions of a certain period of European history. The earliest development of democratic institutions over the field of European culture was in those areas where the "bourgeois" class, as the result of special trading conditions, first attained a weight in politics. Democratic institutions are, in fact, the political expression of the phase of capitalist economics. This is clear enough in the history of the Greek and Italian trading cities of the earlier Classical culture, and parallels can be established further back in phases of the Ægean and Egyptian cultures. In the history of modern European civilization democratic institutions first assumed importance in just those areas where feudalism had given place to a capitalist system of society—in the Italian cities and in Catalonia, and in the Flemish and Hanseatic towns. As the economic importance of the Italian and Catalonian trading areas declined, the power of the "bourgeois" capitalist class—and with it their political institutions—also fell into decay. These areas passed under the control of neighbouring feudal-imperialist monarchies. At the same time, with the expansion of trans-oceanic trade, a tremendous impetus was given to the capitalist communities in England and Holland, with the result that they ultimately perverted the national development of the feudal-agricultural states in which they were situated, and the political institutions, suitable to the expression of the power of their special economic class, became the dominant and permanent institutions of all classes in their respective countries. It follows that Parliamentary institutions—far from being the expression of the natural political genius of the Englishman—are the expression of the natural political genius of the "bourgeois" class, which has evolved through these organs of virtually fictitious representation a perfect mechanism for the perpetuation of the dominance of the interests of particular sections of the nation as against those of the nation as a whole.

Parliamentary institutions were no more original to Britain than were any of the other movements and institutions which have affected or directed the course of European history. Roman law, on which our legislation is based, had been subject to ancient Oriental influences. Pan-European Catholicism was a strange amalgam of Asiatic dogma, Mediterranean vision and organizing power, Germanic emotion, and Celtic mysticism. Protestantism, which came into England out of Germany and Bohemia, had its many obscure and diverse origins among the strange sects of the Byzantine Empire, where the radical sophistication of a dying civilization had mingled with the crude puritanism of untutored barbarian peoples. The Rationalism of the eighteenth century was essentially the creation of the new city mind of all Europe. Englishmen, Germans, Scotsmen, Frenchmen, and Czechs were its prophets, but even here the earlier Rationalists were influenced by the state-socialism of the Peruvian Incas, and others, such as Voltaire, by the passivistic thought of India and China. It follows, then, that Fascism is a movement no more foreign to the British genius than was Dutch Parliamentarism, French Republicanism, or German Socialism, and it is in far greater degree a movement expressive of the European political mind than is the Asiatic Communism of the Russians, which has borrowed from Europe only a Jewish Messiah.

Fascism has, so far, found in England a recent but not inadequate exponent in the figure of Sir Oswald Mosley. And those who dislike his personality–they are not few, those who disparage his abilities–they are fewer, and those who fear his policies–they are many, have either to admit that he is the most startling, the most objectionable, or the most stimulating among the men who have created or disturbed the politics of post-War Britain. At thirty-six, Oswald Mosley is already an experienced parliamentarian. None of his generation and not many of his contemporaries can claim the same continuity of practical experience of politics through the history of the two post-War decades. His changes of political allegiance, which have aroused the hostility of the older parties, seem rather to represent the unsatisfied search for a valid creed by which so many other men of his years have in their own minds been troubled. During the Coalition Parliament he first appeared as the associate of Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, and Colonel Aubrey Herbert, in a forlorn effort to represent something of a new Tory idealism in that ill-assorted and heterogeneous assembly. Again, with others of his generation, he suffered disillusion in the ranks of the Labour Party, and emerged to attempt a leadership of his own.

Oswald Mosley, two years ago, was generally admitted by judges of political form to have an important political future. His isolation, more recently, from all orthodox political associations and from all Parliamentary activities is not without significance. This young and undeniably powerful political mind stands or falls by the success or failure of the Fascist conception in Britain. He has built up an organization which has, from the beginning, been given little publicity, but which is now upon a national basis, and which is gathering impetus from month to month. His early failures, and the ridicule which has been heaped upon his movement by the owners of a press who quite naturally dread its success, have tended to lull the democratic parties into a sense of complacent security. The present writer remembers a similar sense of security in Berlin less than five years ago, when a prominent Conservative, now closely identified with the Nazi Government, referred to Hitler as a man of fantastic ideas, representative of no coherent body of opinion within the Reich.

Oswald Mosley, in his book, *Greater Britain*, and in more recent speeches and writing, which have taken his ideas still further, proclaims the need for a disciplined corporate consciousness which must prelude the drastic reorganization of the political and economic structure of Great Britain on lines compatible with the needs of the twentieth century. His policy requires the comprehensive readjustment of the capitalist system, and while modest ownership in property would not only be preserved but expanded so that it found a broader basis within the community, it cannot be disguised that the private control of great accumulations of wealth, and its use in directions which were not considered to be in the interests of Great Britain, regarded as an economic unit, would be rigorously curtailed. The whole Parliamentary system, which has been so developed in the interests of powerful sectional groups as to make continuity of national policy impossible, and the authority of the executive abortive, would be liquidated. It would be replaced by a system based on the representation of the productive forces of the country—agriculture and industry; and such a body might be expected to enforce a policy which would ruthlessly ignore all interests which could not be shown to operate to the direct benefit of the people of Great Britain. The application of Fascist principles, rather than the present democratic theories, to certain problems of empire, would, of course, completely transform the present situation, in which our Parliamentary leaders are awaiting the results of a process of disintegration in a spirit of placid and impotent optimism.

But the political and economic implications of Fascism are not so significant as the sequence of moral and spiritual reactions which derive inevitably from the Fascist faith. Through the stale and weary streets which modern Capitalism has permitted to its industrial millions, from the emptying, blighted fields that fed Britain to her greatness, men are called to revolution. But it will be a national revolution, carried in the cold anger of a disciplined intent to integrate the race. "What I fear", said Mosley in his resignation speech from the Labour Government, when his mind was already feeling its way subconsciously towards Fascism—

"What I fear much more than a sudden crisis is a long, slow crumbling through the years until we sink to the level of a Spain, a gradual paralysis beneath which all the vigour and energy of this country will succumb. This is a far more dangerous thing, and far more likely to happen unless some effort is made. If the effort is made how relatively easily can disaster be averted. . . . What a fantastic assumption it is that a nation which within the lifetime of every one has put forth efforts of energy and vigour unequalled in the history of the world, should succumb before an economic crisis such as the present."

At the present juncture, when the tempo of crisis is tending to arouse the awareness of the people, Fascism appeals alike to those elements of the younger-minded middle class who are conservative by temperament and strongly nationalist in spirit, and to those rarer and more dynamic individuals who, naturally revolutionary in their outlook, have been disappointed and exasperated by the failure of all leadership from the left to approach any fulfilment of their aspirations. Such are the classic social elements who have in other European countries germinated Fascist revolution. The British character, in the placidity of which the democratic parties repose, perhaps, an exaggerated degree of confidence, will not fail, in the event, to respond to the proper stimulus. Just before the War the widespread movement directed against Parliament, in sympathy with the Ulster loyalists, assumed formidable proportions within two years of its initiation. That movement, psychologically limited as it was, and directed only to the safeguarding of certain limited objectives, would—had not the War intervened—have developed into a formidable revolt against the whole theory and system of Democracy in Britain. The Ulster movement was, in fact, the first Fascist movement in Europe, and its spontaneous development, not only in Northern Ireland, but everywhere throughout Great Britain, is the best answer to those sophists who proclaim that the principles of modern Fascism can find no response in the British character.

An Unknown Inventor

Andrew Corry

Everyone is reasonably familiar with the chief mechanical inventions that make our age what it is. The printing press, the Franklin stove, the cotton gin, the spinning loom, the condensing steam-engine, the locomotive, the steamship, the telegraph and the telephone, the reaping machine, the motor car, the balloon and the airplane, and the wireless: what a triumphant progeny of the inventive imagination applied to the use of men! In childhood we learned to patter the names of the benefactors who gave us these marvels, these playthings of the gods: Gutenberg, Franklin, Whitney, Arkwright, Watt, Stephenson, Fulton, Morse, Bell, McCormick, the brothers Montgolfier, the Wrights, Curtiss, Marconi; and Edison's fame was like a great torch to our feet. I think we would rather have been Edison than President. Those of us who wished to please the teacher with an extra dash of erudition mentioned the microscope and the electric furnace, the fluoroscope and the X-ray machine. The competitive spirit informed our researches; each day the bright boys in the class produced dustier names from the past until, with Archimedes and the screw, the wedge, the wheel and axle, the pulley, the lever, and the inclined plane, the beginning had been reached; there was, we thought, nothing more. It was a time of war, I remember, and we were excused our remissness in naming the dead kings when we artfully gambitted with a war-invention and its maker.

Looking back on those days across the waste of the lean years, I have sometimes wondered whether we chose our heroes wisely. The inventions that we never named seem each day to acquire a higher prominence, to throw a longer shadow. Who invented fire and clothing and houses? Who discovered our foods and natural medicines? Who first fashioned our pots and pans? Who invented cooking? Who domesticated animals and plants? Who invented agriculture? Who elaborated our primitive language and taught hands first to write? Who sang our first songs, painted our first pictures, modelled our first images, offered our first worship? To these great unknown I bring late and withered wreaths.

It is not that I would throw my old heroes into the dust-bin. Without printing I should be wretched, fearful without fire-arms, coarsely clothed without loom and jenny, little travelled without train and motor and ship, dispirited without the conveniences of the mechanical age. Even so, I could be warm, wholesomely fed, and skilful of hand; I could catch my broil and cultivate my bake; I could talk to my kind, and sing, and paint; and I could worship for being able to live and love humanly.

Fortunately we have not yet been called upon to make division among these amenities. Our century, whatever may follow, can still enjoy though with some dimming of hope the best of the two worlds. A few defeatists there are who have rushed back to the primitive to save their souls. This they may do and welcome, for my part. I respect their tenderness of conscience and strangeness of vision while I wonder whether they are myopic or far-sighted; and I should not presume to scan their struggles were the wrestlings of spirit not noisy in the printing-press. These men appear like *Macheath*, happy with either were t'other dear charmer away! But for most of us the times do not pose this singular dilemma. Where I live the wilderness is scraggy and the winters are harsh and long, and I am not altogether willing to return to "the numerous and weary days of our fathers before the flood".

Nevertheless when poverty pinches and the cold nips and hunger sharpens gratitude, we are more disposed to count up what we thankfully own. It was once with us as with the little boy in Selden's table-talk:

> . . . give him a plum, he makes his leg; give him a second plum, he makes another leg; at last, when his belly is full, he forgets what he ought to do; then his nurse, or somebody else that stands by him, puts him in mind of his duty: "Where's your leg?"

I have made my leg therefore to the inventors of the durable amenities, not because I am replete with plums but for the sake of good memories and sly hopes.

Lest there be jealousy when these lauds are mollifying the shades, I must single out one spirit for belated tribute. It hovers restlessly by firesides and nurses its rage at the neglect that it has suffered from forgetful men. There are wraiths more illustrious than this, and many more ancient, whose wispy substance glows brightlier than this newcomer's (a mere century or two in eternity) as a star of the first magnitude beams above its dim companions, for you should know that the brightness of a ghost depends not only upon its inherent lustre but also the faithfulness with which its memory is kept among men. Our ghost is decently classical and quite appropriately rages. It is dim and fattish in form, the ghost of the inventor of the rocking-chair.

To this last great unknown I offer a fillet of laurel while I record in its praise the curious history of the invention which, perhaps more than any other, makes the restless American feel at home in his house: the rocking-chair. Its form is well known to the North American but as it is a rare curiosity abroad it merits a brief description: and, by the way, if other writers on domestic cultural anthropology were similarly explicit, the subject would gain in charm what it would have lost in mystery. The definition given in the standard contemporary encyclopaedias leaves much to be desired, but I quote it for what it is worth:

ROCKING-CHAIR, n., *A chair mounted upon rockers.*

Searching further we find:

ROCKER, n. [<ME. *rokker*; <*rock*², v.] *The curved piece of wood upon which a cradle or rocking-chair rocks.*

And:

*ROCK*², v. [<ME. *rokken*, also *roggen* (cfr. OF. *rocquer)*, <AS. **roccian* (in a gloss) = Dan. *rokke* = Swed. freq. *rockera*, shake, rock; cfr. OHG. *rucchen*, MHG. *rucken*, *rücken*, G. *rücken*, pull, = Dan. *rykke* = Swed. *rycka*, pull, = Icel. *rykkja*, pull roughly and hastily; from the noun, OHG. *ruc* (gen. *rucch*-), MHG. *ruc* (gen. *ruck*-), G. *ruck*, a pull, jolt, jerk, = Swed. *ryck*, = Dan. *ryk*, a pull.] *To move backward and forward in a cradle, chair, etc.*

From these statements it appears that a rocking-chair is some kind of device in which the seated person can move backward and forward in the manner of rough and hasty pulling, jerking, and jolting. Now there cannot be two opinions of the inadequacy of such a definition. It is misleading, sinisterly misleading. Oral tradition, attributing to *rocking-chairing* the quality of a gentle exercise fit for the venerable, is at one with literature against the sense conveyed in those poisonous extracts. Let the fair reader test for himself the propriety of *ROCK*[2], v., with its savage derivation and affinities scarcely concealed in the bland malice of the definition, in these lines of a lullaby:

> *Rock*-a-bye, Baby,
>   In the tree-top.
> When the wind blows
>   The cradle will rock;
> When the bough breaks,
>   The cradle will fall:
> Down will come Baby, cradle, and all!

If *ROCK*[2], v., means to move et cetera, in a manner of rough and hasty pulling, jerking, and jolting, the exquisite humour of these lines is irretrievably lost. Mother and babe both understand the fitness of this lullaby to lie in its contrast between the slow sweeping lull of the "rock-a-bye", properly understood, and the rough and hasty pulling, jerking, and jolting of the catastrophe. The dull dogs of scholars may say what they like, I will stand by the women and children, who mean something else.

Examples crowd upon one to the same effect but I shall leave the naming of them to pedantry, for this is but a secondary matter and I must press on. I have called the definition sinisterly misleading. A conspiracy is afoot to cheat the rocking-chair of its true provenance and its unknown inventor of his due and the definition basely panders to this crime through the clumsy intricacy of etymology. The Nordic barbarians claim this homely symbol of our domestic felicity and contented old age. The secret is out!

Let us consider the literature of the rocking-chair for the light it may throw on its origins, light by the way which exposes the feeble fiction of the Nordic myth. It is useless to search for references to it in the classics of the coloured peoples: their genius, such as it is, never suggested to them the superior advantages of a device combining motion with repose, activity with indolence. At bottom the coloured races are really very simple and they like simple pleasures; it is only the Caucasian brain that delights in paradox and creates the mechanical embodiment of one. A search of the literatures of the Nordic peoples is equally fruitless. The Nordic men were barbarians addicted to sailing, fishing, and fighting, the three occupations for which the rocking-chair is quite useless. One ordinarily turns to the Greeks for the beginnings of things but here again the probabilities of national culture are against our enquiry. The rocking-horse may represent a degenerate variant of the Trojan horse, bearing with grim humour the tale of Priam to the victors' nurseries; but the rocking-chair has no historic prototype in Greek history from which it might have degenerated. Latin literature knows not the rocking-chair either, though the professors have attempted to carpenter one out of a verse or two in Ovid where, in Dryden's translation,

High in his hall, *rocked* in a chair of state
The king with his tempestuous council sate.

The verses of the original are not by me, but I cannot believe that so just a classicist as Dryden would have offended the proprieties by having a king rocking (physically) in his throne; the image is symbolic of the king's mental state. As with the classical, so it is with the mediaeval literatures; loquacious on so many subjects, they are silent on the rocker. The object itself makes its appearance in America under the name of "Boston rocker"—a form which is said to have persisted for two centuries and is remarkable for having its seat moulded and its arms curved to accommodate better the human shape—and it is therefore fitting that its literary appearance should also be in an American work, W. M. Baker's *The New Timothy* (1870), where every circumstance points to its homeliness. Perhaps research may disclose references to the rocking-chair in diaries, letters, or journals of earlier date: indeed the very name of the "Boston rocker" gives earnest to the hope that it may: but polite letters, if I am not mistaken, wanted its easy familiarity until *The New Timothy*. I am aware that our British cousins may remind me of the passage in *Martin Chuzzlewit*:

> During the whole dialogue, Jonas had been *rocking* on his chair. . .

but the citation is not to a rocking-chair which can be rocked *in*, but a common chair which can be rocked *on*. The difference is significant. Turn and twist as they will, the fabulists are unable to show that the rocker is not an American invention. Literature is against them, as we have seen; and tradition, investing the mental quirks of peoples with the sanction of custom and prescription of usage, is against them. There is, on the other hand, every force from these twin arsenals to prove that the invention is one which is most at home in America, possesses qualities fitting it specially to be liked by Americans, and answers a psychological and physical need of the American. Can social science go farther than this?

The manner of the making of the invention is shrouded in oblivion, as is the name of the maker; documents are wanting; history is silent; fame has been forgetful. But these obstacles to knowledge are not proof against the resources of research. Sociology were hanicapped indeed if the student deferred to such obstacles. Applying to the problem the technique of the sociologist, we shall proceed to consider the three theories which seek to explain the marvel. The first is stated in this passage from *The New Timothy* and, though probably not original there, is interesting because it shows that even in 1870 an earlier hypothesis had attained the weight of a responsible theory.

> He has extracted a particularly important one, and leaning back in his rocking-chair—*that cradle of grown up babies* [italics mine]—is obeying my Lord Bacon and inwardly digesting the same. [p. 32.]

The theory herein proposed can be dismissed as a satirist's pleasantry. It lacks the high decorum essential in a serious proposal and can be left, like Samuel Butler's amateurish and literary criticisms of evolution, to the trifler unable to grasp the graver issues of science. We may call it the Cradle Theory and turn without further comment to the second, the Tilt Theory. It holds that the rocking-chair was developed in response to the need felt and evidenced by restless youths who, at dinner and elsewhere, tilt and rock on their straight-back chairs. There is a certain *naturalism* in this explanation that deserves praise. No serious student of the national manners can seriously entertain the theory for a moment however, since it flies in the face of experience. No adult would permit his boy's bad manners to receive the shadow of justification against parental complaint by making or accepting an invention the effect of which is to license and encourage balancing feats.

The third theory, which I introduce here with due modesty as a slight though fervent tribute to the national inventive genius as it appears to me and a few friends, has the merit of intrinsic probability, psychological and physical soundness, and mechanical rightness. It is founded, moreover, on careful observation. Perhaps it is weakest in the side in which the Cradle Theory is strongest: in literary appeal. But I would remind the critic who might scant it on that account of the peculiar requirements of a piece of scientific prose. Wit must be sacrificed to comprehensiveness, brilliance to clarity, directness to plausibility. I shall be plain in my Collapse Theory, but you may be sure I shall be truthful.

So this is the manner of the invention of the rocking-chair. It was originally quite an ordinary straight-back chair, probably without arms, yet slender and graceful. The kind of chair, in fact, which everyone likes to have. Now there are many very stout people in the country ("the land of plenty" is the poet's polite version of the fact) and they are, indirectly, the cause of the invention. For fat people like slender chairs and if they see one in a room will instantly make for it to sit down in it in preference to other, stouter structures. This is natural, of course, as their affliction makes them sensitive and their temperament makes them hopeful. They cannot think of themselves as so much larger than others—that were a merit their sensitive natures shrink from claiming—so they constantly test this opinion by behaving as thinly as possible. But gravity enters the picture at this point. Have you ever watched a stout person let himself into a chair? He lowers himself gently till he is six inches above the seat, then gravity overcomes his bulk and he flings himself into the chair. The chair tilts back under the impact and unless it is strongly built indeed, the back or legs will crack or even break off. His embarrassment is great, the mortification of the thin owner of the thin chair is intense, and such hospitality soon becomes costly. By fitting curved pieces of wood under the chair, contrived so that the forces will be converted from shattering into rolling, the destruction is averted and everyone is made much easier in the mind. And thus the invention of the rocking-chair was accomplished.

Any sceptical reader who is disposed to doubt the truth of the Collapse Theory is invited to test it for himself. Let him, be he ever so ponderous, fling himself into the slenderest Boston rocker: he will see it does not break but rocks him safely and gently to composure and certainty. He would do better, however, to leave these idle experiments to the side and to repair with me to the chapel, where he may fling a few grains of incense to the portly shade of the mortal for whom the first rocking-chair was made.

REVIEWS

The Decline of the Renaissance*

THE ideal man of the Renaissance belongs to the Quattrocento, to the age which produced Leonardo da Vinci, to the period when Cosimo de' Medici ruled in Florence. In that fifteenth century there was a moment when it almost seemed as if the old religion and the new classicism could be merged into a civilization of greater glory than any that had gone before. At that moment the man of the Renaissance stands forth in history.

But this is not Mr. Roeder's view. In seeking a historical background for his synthesis of the typical Renaissance man, he takes the span of years from 1494 to 1530. That period marked the decline of the Renaissance. Those thirty-six years are an epoch of anarchy and corruption, an epoch without regard for principle and without reverence for authority, a period when everything was questioned and everything denied, when the whole past of our civilization was despised, and when every tradition and every gentle convention was mocked by brutal and malicious laughter.

It has been fittingly described as a time when every man was "on the make". The French King wanted to be Head of the Holy Roman Empire, the English King wanted to be Pope, the Emperor Charles the

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*THE MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE *by Ralph Roeder* (VIKING. 540 pp. $3.50)

Fifth wanted to be lord of the world. In the Papacy there was a succession of men whose tenure of that sacred office was a veritable mockery of their Vicarship of Christ: Alexander VI, for whose personal character no Catholic apologist lifts his voice; Julius II, the *Pontefice terribile* who drowned Italy with blood; Leo X, that Giovanni de' Medici who was the incarnation of the Renaissance in its most decadent form; Clement VII, whose crafty and crooked ways earned for him the contempt of men. No wonder that men like Savonarola feared the coming of the day of wrath. No wonder that pious men in high places saw the sack of Rome in 1527 as the just judgement of an angry God.

Against this historical background Mr. Roeder takes up his rôle as chronicler. He is neither a historian nor a biographer *tout court*. He is a literary man, telling a story. It is perhaps unfair to criticize him for keeping to the story and for leaving the historical and biographical problems severely alone. Yet there are times when even the most patient reader of this book may be tempted to wish that the story-teller were a little less inaccurate. An instance that leaps to the mind is Mr. Roeder's treatment of Pietro Aretino; he serves up the old Aretino legend, even to the tale of Pietro's illegitimate birth. Yet both Van Dyke and Hutton have long since acquainted English readers with the results of Luzio's researches on that point.

Our author takes four men—Savonarola, Machiavelli, Castiglione, and Aretino—to illustrate four phases of the moral life of their age. He believes that their lives embodied the adventures of the basic ideas that men live by and that they found, each according to his temperament, their vital principles in religion, in patriotism, in society, and in self-satisfaction.

The ascetic virtue of Savonarola, the expedient virtue of Machiavelli, the convivial virtue of Castiglione, the animal virtue of Aretino—what are these but the final solutions of those who fear life, those who accept it, those who compromise with it, and those who succumb to it?

With these clear-cut distinctions before him, the puzzled reader may well despair of making a synthesis of the author's four protagonists so as to arrive at a finished portrait. Yet this is precisely what Mr. Roeder claims to be possible, for he says that the four figures, taken together, compose the man of the Renaissance.

While our author is to be commended for his choice of these four individuals as representative of four definite currents in the history of the period, he is scarcely to be encouraged in his effort at synthesis. The four men can be merged into two sharply defined and opposing pairs. They cannot be merged into one composite portrait. Savonarola and Castiglione stand forth in defence and service of something the world of their day is losing. The great Friar is the eloquent apostle of the mediaeval Christian faith. The great Courtier is the champion of the feudal tradition of loyalty and the exponent of a gallant effort to compensate for the decay of religion by making morals a thing of manners. Under different banners, these two men stand on the Right. Machiavelli and Aretino, on the contrary, are men of the extreme Left.

An understanding of this point is essential to any study of the period under review. But Mr. Roeder seems to miss it completely. Comparing Savonarola and Machiavelli, he seeks to establish between them a relation which cannot be justified by the philosophical reading of Renaissance history.

> They had much in common. *Both started from the same disabused view of life*, the same radical recognition of its brutality, and both developed their faiths to an extreme and uncompromising conclusion. Religious faith was decaying, undermined by the corruption of the clergy, classical culture, material ease, and the fanatical failure of the Friar; but the need for faith was undying; and the substitute which Machiavelli offered was the choice of his own temperament–the religion of the State.

To say, as in the sentence I have italicized, that Savonarola and Machiavelli started from the same view of life is to miss the essential fact of the Renaissance period of cultural transition. It was a period of spiritual conflict, of opposing ideals, of hostile philosophies. These two men illustrate that conflict. One started from the angle of Christian tradition, while the other was of those who rejected and repudiated that tradition. Savonarola based his hopes for social welfare on a return to the principles and practice of the mediaeval Christian ideal. Machiavelli spurned the lofty transcendentalism of that ideal; he found his deity in Nature and his guide in man. Even in his darkest hour the Dominican friar found his solace in the thought of God. Machiavelli, on the other hand, used his own supreme self-confidence as a weapon against adversity. They approached life from utterly diverse assumptions. The one man is a mediaevalist, thundering forth in protest against the evils of his day. The other is a modern, turning his back on the past and lifting his face to the uncertainties of the future.

Machiavelli and Aretino represent the dominant trends of the Italy of their time. They are indifferent to the past of their civilization, contemptuous of tradition, disdainful of the things of the spirit. Nothing is sacred to them, nothing worthy of reverence. Far from being true Renaissance men, they are heralds of the modern age—with its contempt of beauty and of holiness, its cynical disregard of law, its greedy enjoyment of the brutalities of human life. What our author says of Aretino is true of both of them: their success was a measure of the culture of their age and their rise a portent of its decay.

Apart from any question of the historical worth of the book, it may be said that Mr. Roeder tells his story with a swing and a speed that many a hurried reader will like. But the language of the book is so exuberant as to be a constant source of annoyance. Instances of bad writing and careless thinking occur on almost every page. For example, in the foreword where the author marks out the limits of the period he is about to discuss, he blithely tells us that "no thinking man who lived through those four brief momentous decades was the same when they were over". Assuredly no man, whether he is a thinking man or not, is quite the same after forty years of life. Again, let the reader try to make sense of this description of the eyes of Machiavelli: "they saw without seeing, their insight was cerebral, and they were without inner vision". In another passage we are given a picture of a Cardinal at a window of a Florentine palace "kneeling with upraised hands and ears pink with prayer". More than once not merely the language but even the thought of the author is offensive to the canons of good taste, and throughout the whole book there is a flippancy of manner that tends to keep us from taking this story too seriously.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

The Irish Experiment*

EIGHTEEN months ago, after nearly ten years of patient and increasingly effective opposition to the Cosgrave Government, Eamon De Valera was returned to power as President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State. To many, this sequel to the confused period of modern Irish history which began with the Easter Rebellion of 1916—a period which often seemed a perplexing mixture of genuine self-sacrifice, ingenious political manoeuvering, and irresponsible gunmanship—at first promised little more than a change of riders for the same mad horse. But events have proved that it really marked the end of the older period, in that the long campaign for political advantage has given way to a campaign for economic reformation. Although De Valera is still as enigmatic a figure as ever, he has embarked upon a programme which promises not only to work a permanent modification in Anglo-Irish relations but also to offer an example in domestic economics which the world at large can scarcely ignore.

Two books have lately appeared which attempt some explanation of De Valera's career. One of them, Seán Ó Faoláin's *The Life Story of Eamon De Valera*,

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*THE LIFE STORY OF EAMON DE VALERA *by Seán Ó Faoláin* (TALBOT PRESS. 110 pp. 2/-)
DE VALERA *by Denis Gwynn* (JARROLDS. 286 pp. 12/6)

is a frankly worshipful tribute to the Irish leader, and need merely be mentioned for those who seek an admirer's impressions and recollections of his life. The other, by an Irishman who makes his residence in England, Denis Gwynn, is a more impartial and ambitious study of De Valera in relation to the forces which made him. So far as impartiality goes, Mr. Gwynn has done extremely well, considering the passions his subject has stirred. But even his careful story of De Valera's life until his recent election—his birth in New York City of an Irish-American mother and a Spanish father; his removal at the age of three to a farm in County Limerick; his early years as a teacher of mathematics in Dublin; his rise to notoriety as the last of the rebel battalion commanders to surrender in the Easter Rising; his sojourns in English prisons; his escape and his fund-raising mission to America; his part in the making of the Treaty which closed the Black-and-Tan period, and his unexpected rejection of the Treaty once it was made; his defeat in 1922 by the pro-Treaty party under Griffiths and later under Cosgrave; his long years of opposition to the Cosgrave Government, and the final development of the programme which drove that Government from power—all this still leaves De Valera an enigmatic figure: non-committal, often tactless, always stubborn, a spinner of tenuous arguments, a compromiser who disowns his own compromises when they become embarrassing, a pedantic and sermonizing speaker; and yet a man who has won a larger personal following than any other of his living compatriots, and has in a few years gained more concessions from England than Ireland had gained in many decades before.

It is only in the latter portion of his book, when Mr. Gwynn comes to take up the revolutionary economic policy which the De Valera Government has been pursuing with such doggedness and with considerable success, that one begins to gain a hint of the continuity in the Irish leader's apparently meandering career. His position is still anomalous; indeed, to quote a keen French observer, he is "a Republican whose only claim to authority is as Prime Minister of a Dominion Government whose very validity he contests"; but he appears also as a Republican who no longer wishes to let the Republican hot-heads have their way with Anglo-Irish relations, and who thinks he has found in his economic policies a means of forcing Irish separatism upon the British without resort to arms.

What are his economic policies? They may best be described by contrasting them with the economic policies of the Cosgrave Government which preceded him. That Government had for ten years proceeded upon the assumption that the economic organization of Ireland was inextricably bound up with the English market: it had therefore pursued an aggressive policy of free trade, whose object was the exchange of increasing quantities of Irish agricultural produce against increasing quantities of English manufactures; it looked forward with equanimity to the greater specialization of Irish agriculture, to the production of more and more for sale abroad and less and less for local consumption; and it met political defeat when the depression swept the English market from under the Irish farmer's feet. Against this policy De Valera proposed precisely the opposite one—a policy of strict economic nationalism, with the deliberate political object of killing off the Anglo-Irish trade in order to end once and for all the dependence of Ireland upon Great Britain. The result has been a tariff war to the finish, in which his political astuteness has permitted him to lay the onus on the mother country, thus persuading the Free-Staters to the sacrifices which cessation of the old Anglo-Irish commerce (some 95% of Irish exports went to Great Britain) entailed.

The larger interest of this programme, since pursued with great energy, is that such a complete reversal of economic currents cannot be effected in a country like Ireland, whose industries were few and whose farm population was rapidly tending toward monoculture, without working something very close to a social revolution. In Mr. Gwynn's words, "the whole trend of De Valera's programme is to reverse the trend of modern developments and to work backwards toward a social system based upon peasant proprietorship and small market towns". This indeed has been its effect. Irish farmers have been encouraged to throw into tillage land hitherto reserved for grazing (in order to kill at one blow the export cattle trade and the wheat imports for which it paid), and to produce for local consumption. The few large export industrial units in the country, British owned, have been subjected to discriminatory taxation, while small Irish-owned industries have been encouraged by bounty and protection. There has been a patriotic plea to cease importation and to buy Irish goods. Opposed to him De Valera has had the financiers of the older economy; the owners of large industrial plants such as Guinness and Jacobs, dependent on the export trade; and the vested interests in general, all of whom have predicted ruin for the country. Supporting him he has had the small farmer and the small industrialist, who see new hope; and all who realize the progress toward political independence which economic independence from England would mean.

Whether De Valera arrived at this programme, so different from anything which has arisen in Ireland before, and so close in many ways to the programme of economic nationalism of Fascist Italy, as a result of anything more than political expediency; whether, in short, it represents an economic and social philosophy which he has been elaborating for some time, is difficult to say. The "economic slavery" which he talks of abolishing is not slavery to capitalistic industry so much as slavery to the British market. His public arguments thus far have been practical rather than philosophical. "We believe that we can be self-supporting," he says. "There is no doubt about that so far as food is concerned. If we had food, clothing and shelter, and if in addition to that we developed the industry which is most suitable for us, so as to be able to get the necessary imports which it would buy for us in return—the raw materials that we require—I believe you would not have a man, woman or child in this island willing to work without work to do. . . . We would have to do without certain things which we would be glad to have, but we would not have to do without the real essentials." The inevitable decrease in the "standard of living" which his policies have entailed has naturally occasioned some grumbling, and its increase would be the signal for a new effort by the partisans of the older economics. But thus far the grumbling has not apparently reached dangerous proportions, and the campaign for economic nationalism goes firmly on.

A word remains to be said of the newspaper talk of Fascism and Fascist dictatorship in Ireland. General O'Duffy and his Blue Shirts are in essence a private army in the service of Mr. Cosgrave's United Ireland Party, similar to De Valera's own private corps, the Irish Republican Army. O'Duffy's association with the Cosgrave forces commits him to maintaining Treaty relations with England, and hence to abandoning the policy of economic nationalism and returning to the old Anglo-Irish trade. His Blue Shirts, furthermore, have grown out of an organization of ex-soldiers committed to assuring free elections, and no anti-democratic word has yet been spoken by them. Neither of these commitments would fit in with a truly Fascist programme; and O'Duffy's tentative proposal to combine a vocational council with existing parliamentary institutions seems to arise less from a new economic philosophy than from a desire to supply Cosgrave's supporters with a semblance of a new economic plank, to strengthen the old free-trade platform rendered ineffective by the collapse of the British market during 1930 and 1931. If Fascism on the Italian model is to come to Ireland, it is much more likely to come from De Valera himself. He has already, in his Emergency Imposition of Duties Bill, acquired a semi-dictatorial power, and while he has given little evidence of having reflected upon Fascist principles, he is bringing about a set of economic conditions which must delight Mussolini, as it would any supporter of the agrarian cause: for the whole effect of his activities has been to turn Ireland into a self-sufficient country of small independent farmers, producing for use as well as for market, with its newly arising industry kept from the beginning under strict government control.

MARVIN MC CORD LOWES

Deism in America*

ALTHOUGH there have been admirable scholarly books on American Puritanism and Transcendentalism, Deism, the religion which conditioned the birth of the nation and the moulding of our national ideals from 1775 to 1810, has been much slighted. It is a pleasure, therefore, to find that Professor G. Adolf Koch has written a book on the subject which will be of great use to scholars interested in this field. "The theme of this work", he says, "is the story of what happened when deism spread from the intelligentsia to the common man after the American Revolution; how republicanism in politics became identified with republicanism in religion; how both were sublimated and heralded as forerunners of the millennium in the heyday of the French Revolution; and how republican politics triumphed in 1800 but republican religion was defeated by an equally enthusiastic evangelicalism."

To the development of this theme eight scholarly chapters, largely biographical, are devoted, with some seven-hundred-and-fifty footnotes and a very useful bibliography of nearly thirty pages. The approach

*REPUBLICAN RELIGION: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE CULT OF REASON *by G. Adolf Koch* (HOLT. 334 PP. $3.00).

is reasonably objective and non-partisan, the style simple and pleasing. Of individuals, Ethan Allen and Elihu Palmer receive most attention, although there are excellent chapters on the endeavours to organize a deistical society and to publish a deistical journal, *The Temple of Reason*, which ran for about two years; on the Society of Ancient Druids, connected with Freemasonry and sun-worship; on other prophets, such as Thomas Paine after his return from France in 1802, and such as Kirkbride, John Foster, and the "Walking" Stewart; on the "twilight" of deism as represented in the journal *The Theophilanthropist* (1810-1811); on "respectable deists" looking toward Unitarianism, such as Gay, Chauncy, Mayhew, Freeman, Bentley, and Priestley; and on the "Triumph of Fidelity" following the excesses of the French Revolution and the rise in America of evangelicalism.

Professor Koch says he has "not attempted to explain the sources of Thomas Jefferson's liberal religious beliefs" or to discuss "what he wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*"; he has "not included an analysis of Paine's *Age of Reason* or of any of his other works". And Franklin, who said he "became a thorough deist", is only referred to casually. For this reason, since the major figures are given little attention, the book can hardly be regarded in itself as a comprehensive treatment of the subject, but it does supplement Woodbridge Riley's incisive treatment of the major figures in *American Philosophy, the Early Schools*, and it is especially valuable in offering a host of information about obscure and little known figures presented against their social backgrounds. It should be noted that *Republican Religion* is the seventh volume in the "American Religion Series" which includes such valuable studies as *The Puritan Mind* by Herbert W. Schneider and *Piety and Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology* by Joseph Haroutunian. Such a series by specialists in theology and philosophy is especially welcome after brilliant but narrow and partisan economic interpreters such as Charles A. Beard and the late Vernon Parrington have tended to minimize religious factors or to treat them sardonically as rationalizations of economic motives.

Probably students of literature and of the general history of ideas will wish that Professor Koch had treated deism with more steady reference to the pattern of *European* ideas of which it is a part. As causal factors behind deism in America he lists the growing worldliness of the theocratic régime in New England; the fact that schools and colleges spread deism; the fact that the emotionalism of the Great Awakening belittled a clerical learning; contact, in the colonial wars, with British and French disseminators of deism; the bickerings of divergent Protestant sects; and the development of a toleration looking toward indifference. No doubt all these factors were operative, but one wishes he had spent some space tracing with precision the rise of deism in England and France, its reinforcement by Newtonian concepts of the regularity and universality of natural law, and its historical definitions; and that he had discussed how American deism differed from that in Europe and *why*. The consideration of the problem from the international perspective seems especially desirable, for this was the most cosmopolitan period in our history: the leading deists, Franklin, Jefferson, Paine, and Barlow, all lived many years in France and were saturated with French deistic ideas.

And finally, students of literature will doubtless wish Professor Koch had devoted more attention to the manner in which deism influenced literary theory and practice; Philip Freneau, the chief poet of the period, is practically unmentioned, although, as I have tried to show elsewhere, deism played an important part in motivating both his faith in an altruistic democracy and his writing of nature poetry whose master-theme was transience. It would also be interesting to ascertain to what extent deism motivated humanitarian service and economic *laissez-faire* and the increased stress on the study of science in schools.

Although an accurate description of chaotic facts and nothing more sometimes passes for scholarship, our best literary historians today seek not only to describe the external and chaotic facts of their subject accurately but also to explain *why* the facts are as they are. They seek to re-create so far as possible the organic mind of the author and to discover the hidden springs which motivated his comprehensive activities. Those interested in this period who are practising a genetic scholarship devoted to tracking an author or thinker back to the underlying assumptions which help us to bring order out of the apparent chaos of his work will in many cases find that religious assumptions are primary, and such scholars will find *Republican Religion* an invaluable help, although with the reservations I have mentioned.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

Literature and the Good Life *

THE University of Minnesota Press has issued the third of the posthumous volumes of the work of the late Oscar W. Firkins; it contains seventeen essays, of which five have not previously been published. To one who feels, as does this reviewer, that all the work of Firkins should be made permanently available, this volume, excellent as it is, can serve only as an appetizer. We have, for instance, the collected dramatic criticism of Shaw and Beerbohm; and yet in criticizing the theatre Firkins was superior to either in insight and brilliance. It is to be hoped that the present volume, and the forthcoming collection of letters, will create an audience large enough to make the reissuance of his dramatic criticism a publishing possibility.

Firkins was primarily a literary critic. His writing is of that rare high quality which assures his seat in the pantheon if not his popularity in the market-place. His criticism is of the sort Brownell so much desired to see in America, "criticism of scope, full of generalizations, bringing to bear trained faculties and stored wisdom to the task of that constructive work which shows the relations as well as the character of its subject". It has the sureness of a man who knows his own powers and the candour of one who realizes that life is not always lived atop Olympus. Firkins had the ability to diagnose, intuitively, the spiritual diseases of his fellows; to cut directly to the infected spot, using trenchant irony as a surgeon uses a scalpel; to sum up

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* SELECTED ESSAYS *by Oscar W. Firkins* (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS. 298 pp. $2.50)

conclusively as the doctor sews up the patient, neatly and with dispatch.

These essays discuss, among other topics, the unrestrained power of realism, the ultimate flaccidity engendered in society by too much liberalism, the uncertainty of the criteria by which decency is judged, the relevance of Shelley to our age, the future of Emerson, the qualities of Howells's realism, the character of Macbeth, the sanity of Hamlet. Firkins's social criticism does not always, I think, maintain the high level of his literary criticism; but he invariably says what he wants to say with such concision and incisiveness, with such probing and pervading scepticism, that one who would choose some other answer is forced to stop and look deeply into himself before he can achieve the assurance that his own answer is, after all, more satisfactory.

Firkins saw around him the decay of Christianity and its divorce from culture. In his essay on Howells he says: "Once worship, freedom, culture, taste, and ethics coexisted. Today worship survives among the uncultivated; culture survives among the irreligious." Culture has turned to other guides, science, progress, internationalism. Science he views as an irrelevance; progress is a salesman who, since we know not what we want, sells us what he can; internationalism, towards which we move helplessly, promises a mixture of races with no assurance that the mixture will be half as good as any one of the nationalities which compose it. In themselves these forces are neither good nor bad; but their usurpation of power is evil. "The human spirit should resume its sway." Here lies the hope of literature and of life.

All vain and fantastic theories to the contrary notwithstanding, the redemption of literature, its enfranchisement and prosperity, lie in its participation in a movement for the redemption of the spirit of man as a whole from its ignoble bondage. Art is the child of life, and, being its child, should be its sustenance and stay; filial piety is among the few remaining virtues which our listlessly ironic age consents to honor. The time will come when men will look back with scorn and amazement at the pitiful criticism which ignores material, which emphasizes virtuosity, which finds its criterion in the agreement of the result with the intention, a procedure manifestly inept since one of the two elements to be compared is inaccessible to observation. Subject and aim, their quality and grade, are all-important. The man who, like Howells, paints the good in men's lives that it may be loved and the ill in men's lives that it may be mended, being the real human being, is the true artist.

Not only is the human spirit submerged, human beings have lost the vision and fervour which give institutions and rituals their vitality. Such fervour as exists is mostly manufactured. Men, at least some men, accept cheering on the Fourth of July, church attendance on Sunday, applause in the theatre or concert-hall, as proof that patriotism, worship, and artistic appreciation are realities, "though they might learn from the child that it is easier to say 'Thank you' than to be grateful". Emotional experience of a high order is not continuous but intermittent; life, intellectual and emotional life, must be viewed rather as a series of points than as a line. To him who holds such a view it is always possible to hope that at any moment—for a moment—real feeling may "restore institutions and rituals to their lost vigour and reality". He may believe that even behind the sham lies a spark of feeling. "The vain sonorities which emanate from patriotic, academic, and religious gatherings should be viewed less as hollow vaunts than as signals pointing consciousness to its destination". The possibility of a renewal exists; consciousness cannot shirk its task which is the restoration of vision and fervour. Therein lies the relevance of Shelley.

Shelley, though he was "in a sense shipwrecked like the rest of us", retained the ardour which we lack. Like us, seeing the decay of tradition, he turned his eyes from God to man. Firkins summarizes his three leading traits: "the cult of humanity, the severance of that cult from tradition, and the association of that cult with faith and ardour". The cult of humanity, the feeling of brotherhood in suffering, says Firkins, is almost all that survives the wreck of tradition. Yet even though we realize that our kinship is a kinship in suffering, our beneficence is cold. Shelley can teach us ardour, he can teach us "that a principle may be worshiped like a star, that a race may be loved like a woman".

Let us return to the decay of Christianity. "Christianity", wrote Mr. Firkins, "is a sinking ship with treasure in its hold. . . . Everybody acts, it would seem, on the highly uncommercial assumption that the cargo of a sinking ship cannot be valuable." We must salvage what we can but we must charter a new ship for the remainder of the voyage. "The faith which bred the veneration for life and man is irrecoverable; the future of the race may hinge on the question whether, being irrecoverable, it is also irreplacable." For Dr. Dietrich's Minneapolis congregation he wrote

The Sermon on the Mount: Its Rational Basis. The essay is reasonable; it is more than reasonable, it is discerning; but it seems to fail, because it attempts the impossible. The justification of the Golden Rule is not a rational justification. "It seems clear", said Mr. Firkins, "that for an unprejudiced mind all Selves as Selves would be equally significant." Is that any more than another way of re-affirming the brotherhood of man? Is a brotherhood of man, even an enlightened brotherhood, a substitute for Christian charity? Without being a Christian one may doubt it.

Mr. Firkins's fundamental assumptions resemble in part the assumptions of Ernest Seillière. Both men assume that man is motivated by a will to power. Both assume that reason is the guiding and controlling force. The positive side of both is weaker than the negative side. Reason alone led Mr. Firkins back to Shelley. It is not unreasonable that it should. A man of high motives, however wary he may be, finding high-mindedness in others is apt to credit their thought with validity. We may grant Shelley purity of emotion; we may grant that its power and vigour are all to the good. We need only look around us to learn that our beneficence is cold. The Associated Charities of Chicago are advertising blatantly "Mercy Pays". But we may ask, is there any more humanity in Shelley's

> Devotion to something afar
> From the scene of our sorrows?

than in "Mercy Pays"?

Oscar Firkins was in accord with the Babbitt-More group of Humanists as often as he was opposed to them. Or, if it be sweeter the other way round, he was opposed to them as often as he was in accord. "The world is saved", he wrote, "by the largest possible choice among alternatives to one of which, after inspection and decision, it is prepared unflinchingly and stoutly to adhere." It must finally reject one or the other of these points of view or it may reject both; but wherever the art of criticism survives in our country Oscar Firkins's thoughts, the manner of their phrasing, his unflagging wit, and his impeccable taste will assure him of a continued audience.

J. BRYAN ALLIN

A Portrait of Washington*

THERE is perhaps no one else alive who knows as much about George Washington as John C. Fitzpatrick. It is even to be doubted whether anyone else has ever known as much, even George himself. For certainly no normal man remembers all his own actions and writings quite as vividly as Mr. Fitzpatrick knows the actions and words of his hero.

Mr. Fitzpatrick's career holds in it something particularly pleasing to those who are discontent with the practices of American academic and scholarly life. His education included no advanced degrees, no submission to the standardized requirements of contemporary learning. He was born in Washington in the 1870's, went to grammar school and high school, and at the age of twenty-one became a member of the staff of the Library of Congress. It is to the lasting honour of that Library that Mr. Fitzpatrick's associa-

* GEORGE WASHINGTON HIMSELF *by John C. Fitzpatrick* (BOBBS-MERRILL. 544 pp. $3.50)

tion with it has been maintained. For thirty-six years he has devoted himself to the study of the documents of American history, mainly to the study of Washington documents. He has edited untold masses of Washingtoniana: account books, letters, diaries. At last, when the late and little-lamented George Washington Bi-Centennial Commission was formed, to celebrate fittingly the two-hundredth anniversary of our first President's birth, through some administrative miracle Mr. Fitzpatrick was put in charge of the one department of the Commission's activity which seems likely to yield permanent fruit: the publication of a complete and definitive edition of the writings of Washington. Thus we find that one of the most learned and careful of specialists in American historical research is not a Doctor of Philosophy; holds no degree, except an honourary one, from any of our great universities; is a man with none of the proper academical distinctions whatever.

Mr. Fitzpatrick's latest book is, among other things, an extraordinary achievement in technique. For he has made Washington describe himself to us. By using only the documents, and largely Washington's own writings, Mr. Fitzpatrick has made the man tell his own story and describe his own character. There is a certain amount of interpretation in the book, of course. The author has very little patience with that school of writers who have ferreted about for every petty fault, every vicious meanness which could be read into Washington's character. Mr. Fitzpatrick is frankly a hero-worshipper. But no one can possibly become familiar, however imperfectly, with the records of Washington's life without realizing that here is, indeed, a hero. Except to refute by analysis the aspersions which have been heaped on Washington by those who have desired their little *succès de scandale*, Mr. Fitzpatrick is remarkably dispassionate in his method of writing. Every event, every description of character or physical appearance is related to a letter, a diary entry, an account-book entry, or an authentic contemporary source. What emerges is perhaps the clearest picture we have yet had of George Washington as an individual.

The limitations which Mr. Fitzpatrick's method entail inevitably give the book a certain coldness. He cannot allow himself the pleasure of attempting to describe the life of Virginia at the time of Washington's youth; he makes no effort at trying to appraise for us the society in which Washington lived, and which must have had a great influence in forming Washington's character. An adequate study of that subject, indeed, still remains to be made. The whole social history of the American colonies has as yet not received its fitting record. Perhaps the only really first-class social study of colonial life so far done is the first two volumes of James Truslow Adams's history of New England. Nothing "convincing", if one may borrow a hackneyed word from the vocabulary of the literary critic, has yet been written on the social history of the colonial South.

So we have to try to understand George Washington just as Mr. Fitzpatrick has very wisely presented him—an isolated human phenomenon whose social background we can only conceive vaguely and by analogy with something which we think must have been similar, but was probably very different: life in the remoter and more rural parts of eighteenth-century England. How faulty such an analogy probably is can be understood in an instant if one recalls that although the eastern parts of Virginia had been settled for over a hundred years in Washington's youth—longer, it might be pointed out, than the city of Chicago has been settled today—the edge of the unknown, full of danger, lay almost within sight of the stately mansions of the East.

Mr. Fitzpatrick's book, then, does not explain how George Washington could be, or even how he came to be what he was. It merely shows what he was, from unimpeachable authority. That, in itself, is enough, and deserves our thanks.

Washington as the product of a distinctly agrarian culture is a side of the subject which has received far too little attention. For one thing, perhaps, can be said, in spite of our ignorance of life in colonial Virginia. That is that one can scarcely conceive of Washington, of the man as he revealed himself in his actions and his writings, coming from anything but a landed society, and a society not at all of small free-holders, but rather a society of wealthy landed proprietors, of men having a clearly defined conception of the obligations as well as the privileges of ownership. Such a society is almost certain to depend for its economic existence either on slavery or on a tenant system, or on both. It therefore is always anathema to the liberal. But it seems to be a form of social organization capable of producing men distinguished for a kind of liberality almost inconceivable for even the most liberal of us. The one fact that during the whole eight years of the Revolution Washington received not one cent of pay, and that as President he accepted a salary only because he realized that to refuse it would be to create a bad precedent, is something that seems almost beyond belief, especially when we realize that throughout those years Washington's personal means were steadily dwindling because of his continued service to the State. We have always had our volunteers in times of national crisis, but they have usually been men with wealth in investments not requiring personal attention. Here is one who gave his services when he knew perfectly well that every month he stayed away from Mount Vernon was making him a poorer man.

Washington (in spite of Mr. Fitzpatrick) was perhaps not a very "human" man; somehow he appears a little stuffy and formal to us as we look back at him over the years. It seems almost impossible to call him "charming". Yet he had a magnanimity about him, a fairness and sense of justice, which even today draws us to him, and which must to a large extent have accounted for the greatest miracle he performed: the holding together of the patriot army throughout the war, despite the perfectly incredible stupidity of Congress and the conflicts between the various colonial governments. That he should have done this, through the rigours of our Eastern winters, without money for the soldiers' pay, without clothing for their nakedness, without food for their bellies, can only be explained by saying that the man had character. It is a question worth pondering whether either industrialism or liberalism is capable of producing character of quite that apostolic quality.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE